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EDITED BY CHARLES SHUREY.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



"I've only met one girl who never said nasty things about her friends."

"Dear me, Fred, who was that?"

"I don't know her name—she was dumb."

Miss Tabby's Ghost.

THERE was an extensive prospect between Jemmie's legs, and he, perhaps, knew it, ever trying to shut it out when he walked by allowing his dilapidated boot-heel almost to kiss the quite as unfortunate toe of its neighbour.

To further describe Jemmie, having started with his foot-gear, when the observant eye was cast upward an enormous leather patch, set at queer angles on the posterior of a pair of corduroy breeches, attracted its attention. A much-washed and elaborately-smocked frock hung loosely from his shoulders, but failed to hide the leather patch on Jemmie's nether garment, having, with the lapse of years and the aid of much wear and washing, resolved itself into a pendulous fringe, which obligingly divided in two portions when he walked abroad, allowing the leather patch the privilege of critical inspection by any rear-pedestrian.

And this was all I saw or knew of Leather-Breeches for many a long month, and as much as his neighbours were acquainted with, of his personality; for the old man was bent double with age and the mutilated wide-awake was so drawn down over his face that only a toothless jaw and chin were visible when by any chance he arrived at a dead halt between the "Cross Keys" and his cottage. His residence, which had one habitable room and several otherwise, was situated in a moss-grown alley off the main street, and was known as "Leather-breeches' rag shop."

I often wondered how he subsisted, and continued to do so for a long time, never even knowing that he was a rag-collector until my landlady informed me a few weeks ago that by inadvertence she had slipped a pair of my inexpressibles in the rag-bag.

"Take them out again," said I.

"But Jemmie Leather-Breeches 'ave got 'em," she sobbed.

I thought to comfort my landlady by announcing a swoop on Jemmie for the morrow, when I would reclaim my own.

"He be an ole magpie!" she exclaimed; "nor ain't over civil at the best o' times! But when it comes to tellin' ov him as anythink in the wide world ain't his'n—oh, lor!"

"Never mind, I'll settle the matter," I said decisively, hoping for her speedy retreat from my room.

"But don't you go a-nigh his shop," she pleaded, "there be orful bad luck in that alley, an' ghostisies in his cottage—ever since Mag Thornley were ducked for a witch in our village pond and drowned. That's forty year ago!"

"Oh?" I exclaimed, sniffing romance in the atmosphere.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Gudgeon, arms akimbo, "I were about nineteen year old, mister, an' remembers 'ow he caused the gal to get drowned by sinfully 'cusing the poor thing o' witchery doings! I puffickly recollects," she added; "but never another word about it crosses my lips, for fear o' Miss Tabby's ghostisy a-comin' to me."

"Sit down," I requested, "and tell me all about it."

My coaxing was all in vain, and until, fired with curiosity, setting her wishes at defiance, I called upon Jemmie under the pretext of claiming my inexpressibles, I learned no more; and then—But I am anticipating.

"If you be come arter they breeches," came in response to my knock at his door, "you don't get 'em, Mother Gudgeon. I sucks to what I buys, and the law can't 'cuse me o' stealin'."

In response to the querulous old voice, I said I was the legitimate owner of the lost garment.

"Then come in, an' let us see about whose'n they be."

Accordingly I stepped in, to discover Jemmie crouching over the fire, with my trousers stretched across his knees.

"Ripped the back-seam down," he grumbled "to let in my leather patch—then I means a wearin' ov 'em."

"Mrs. Gudgeon sold them to you in mistake," I informed him.

"Her look out," he sneered, adding with a grin, "but mebbe, it's Miss Tabby's ghostisy stealin' round to square things up a bit. 'Beady-eyes' thinks it laid, but I doubts it—yes, I doubts it!"

"I've never heard of Miss Tabby's ghost," I remarked in a casual manner, hoping to lure him on to further chat.

"Nor you ain't likely to!" he exclaimed. "It be only 'old Leather-Breeches,' 'Beady-Eyes,' and a gal as were drowned on a duckin' stool, as 'ave to do with Miss Tabitha as was."

"I'd like to hear all about it," I suggested, taking a seat.

"It be forty years ago!" he almost screamed. "It ain't your concern. It be best a-sleepin', it be."

"No," he added, emphatically. "Maggie Thornley's a-waitin' t'other side, and I be a-waitin' this—till Beady-Eyes gets grabbed by Miss Tabby—then, poor Miss Tabby'll be a ghostisy no longer. Dead Maggie's been a-watchin' for forty year, and so've I, mister. It's a mortal long time, mister, but us can't die while Mother Gudgeon lives—not us!"

"Beady-eyes?—Mother Gudgeon?" I ventured to inquire, "Do you mean my landlady?"

"Yes. Ferret's eyes—liar's eyes—murderin' eyes be her'n!" he muttered, and then, relapsing into a horrible chuckle, he exclaimed, "But Mother Gudgeon ain't no wife! She be the one as ought to 'ave bin on the duckin' stool—and the village knows it—them as be old enough. No man ain't dared to marry her, becous her lyin' tongue killed poor Miss Tabby. I've seen Mother Gudgeon every anniversary since Maggie Thornley get drowned, a-walkin' by the witch-pond at midnight—mind you, every year

for forty year, wet or fine, on the 'wersary of Miss Tabby's death—chuckin' in a bottle of fresh water!"

"Into the pond?" I queried—"whatever for?"

"That ud be tellin', and I grudges givin' the secret away!"

Pulling out my purse, I noticed a strange glitter in the old fellow's eyes. As he seemed inclined to be fairly communicative, I offered him half a sovereign.

"The first time I've fingered gold for forty year—I've so mortal a hate to it! Mebbe, Beady-eyes'll come to harm to-night!—it be a sign, this gift o' your'n, mister!"

"Well, perhaps!" I murmured; "but about the bottle of water, Leather-Breeches?"

"Oh," he snorted, in response to my query, "you'd best ask Beady-Eyes about that! But look 'ere, young mister, I'll tell you this much. In them days as I were a young man, an' the stool were in vogue, if the body 'cused o' witchery were drowned innocent, the bleef were as the 'cusin' party were bound to die herself or drown herself in the pond. Now," he added, in a solemn voice, "it were Miss Tabby as caused Maggie Thornley to be ducked; an', soon arter Maggie were cruel-drowned, Miss Tabby she died o' the fayver. But it were Beady-Eyes as poisoned Miss Tabby's ear; so the fiend sent the fayver to the wrong 'un. You ax Beady-Eyes the rest; and, young mister, mix up my truth along ov her lies and mebbe you'll git the right end o' the stick!"

Then, with a sullen scowl, the old man proceeded gravely to fix his leather patch into the seat of my good tweed trousers.

"I'd as lief," he called out, as I left the cottage, "as I needn't 'ave stitched this' ere patch on any more breeches to make 'em strong o' the seat; but Beady-Eyes'll last out another pair or two, I reckon."

This, my first visit to Leather-Breeches, took place in the forenoon, and so stimulated my curiosity that I mentally resolved to see him again in the evening. Here was a man, an actual witness of the witchcraft trials of half a century ago, living in the midst of civilization, hugging a grievance to his breast, and one evidently that gnawed to his heart's core.

When I returned to my lodgings, I found Mrs. Gudgeon, strangely enough, filling a bottle at her back-yard pump.

"Expecting a drought?" I inquired cheerily.

"Bless you, no!" she replied. "I'm a bottlin' of cowslip-wine to-day—just rinsin' of the last bottle, sir."

I acquainted her with the fate of my trousers.

"Ah!" she commented in a mysterious fashion—"what's his'n's his'n!"

"Ah!" I cried, "what's his own is his own. I understand. He's a very queer old stick."

"Been talkative?" she asked.

"Yes," assented I, "but in such a wandering fashion that I couldn't make head or tail of what the old fellow said."

"About Miss Tabby's ghostisy?" she queried sharply, placing the bottle on her kitchen table.

"It was something about a cat and a ducking-stool."

"Well," she sighed, "I be the only woman in the village as do know the honest rights o' the thing, so I may as well tell you. To start off, d'ye think I be as old as Leather-Breeches?"

"Decidedly not," I opined, almost shuddering at the glitter in her eyes. "You don't look more than forty-five, Mrs. Gudgeon."

"Don't I? Then I be. D'ye know as I be called 'mother' in the village? I be—all along of old Leather-Breeches' nasty spite! In coorse, witches never was, never will be; but he do like to make folk believe as I be a witch, because I've got a clear skin and look a sight younger than most females o' my own age."

"You'll be wantin' to be busy," she continued, "so I'll tell you straight off; but mark—it ain't to be dotted down for a story-paper. It be too dreadful!"

"All right," I assented.

"Well, forty year ago, or a bit over, Farmer Dale an' his missus was cut off by scarlet fayver. I were in service in their house at the time, at Yewtree Farm, an' Mag Thornley were along with us, an' Leather-Breeches he were the gardener. Miss Tabby, when her parents died, were left in a lonesome fix for a young gal. She did 'ave to keep the books an' such like till her uncle could sell 'is farm in Blankshire an' take up the Yew-tree."

Mrs. Gudgeon then coughed a little, turning away her head.

"It baint flattersome to us," she continued, "as says it of ourself, but I were courtin' of Jeremy Flint at the time."

"Leather-Breeches?" I asked.

"Yes," said she, "an' he were a fine, up-standin' young feller then. An' Mag Thornley, she were that jealous; she put all manner ov obstacles atween us, she did! She follered us up hill an' down dale, as the sayin' goes, an' playgid the very life out ov us both. But time come as the wicked hussy started to show sinful doings. I caught Mag one day a-boilin' down yerbs an' roots an' elder-bark, an' birdlime, bats' wings, fieldmouses' tails, an' snails—"

"Stop! stop!" I cried, putting my fingers in my ears, thinking Beady-Eyes would run on in the same strain for an unconscionable time; "it is too horrible. She was brewing a love-potion, I suppose?"

"She were, and worse, as you'll hear soon. She brewed it for Jeremy an' me to crost us in love, but somethink else came ov it. She tried it—mind ye, I watched—on the cows belongin' to our dear Miss Tabby fust ov all, jest to prove whether she could be a witch with a 'orrid evil eye. The cows all died, an' arter that Mag

'ad only got to stare on a cow, and it soon kicked the bucket. Lor bless you!" she exclaimed, "to save the sinful gal I often walked out along of her, gatherin' cowslips an' sich like—but"—and here the woman flung her coarse apron over her face and whined—"it were no good! The dear cows, with their sweet, precious, little calves, just give up the ghostisy dreckly they saw Mag Thornley. It were orful, 'orrible, it were!"

"Marvellously so!" I exclaimed, scarcely able to repress my merriment at the woman's vivid imagination.

"It preyed on my mind to that length," she continued, "as brought me brain-fayver, an' then, whiles our dear Miss Tabby was nussing of us, the hinfornation crosted my lips. Now comes the orful doin's!" she said in a lower tone. "Miss Tabby give out as Mag Thornley 'ad got the evil eye, an' the folk in the village ducked her to see if she be a witch or no."

"How was it done?" I asked.

"They tied Mag on a big stool, an' pitched 'er in the middle o' the Green Pond. Sez they:

"If you be a witch, you'll not sink! If you baint a witch, you'll drown."

I asked Mrs. Gudgeon if she were present during the iniquitous ordeal.

"In coorse I warn't!" she retorted snappishly. "I were ill abed with brain-fayver, I tells you. But I a'most cried my life out when they comes an' tells us that just afore evil Mag went under she yelled out that Jeremy Flint could swear to it as I put poison in them cow's mouths."

"But Jeremy was your sweetheart!" I exclaimed.

"He wuz—in coorse he wuz!" she replied, viciously poking the fire; "but afore Mag drowned she'd laid her evil eye on him—an' won him right away from me, you see! Then, of coorse, folk waited to see who were innocent—an' poor Miss Tabby died through 'cusin' of her wrongful; an' ever since Miss Tabby's ghostisy rises on the 'versary o' Mag's drowning an' walks round the pond at midnight, callin' for a drop o' spring-water to cool her tongue."

"And there's no one to give it her?" I ventured to suggest.

"There baint!" she snapped. "She hadn't ought to use what passed my lips in the fayver. She be punished, poor thing—a-dwellin' in the bottom o' that mucky pond till resurrection-day!"

"Oh!" I ejaculated; "but Leather-Breeches says Maggie Thornley and Miss Tabby were both innocent, and the guilty one is compelled to fling the bottle in every year!"

"That be an orful owda-cious lie!" she cried wrathfully. "If it be thatwise, they've never caught the evil-eyed a-doin' of it."

"Supposing," I argued, by way of adding to my brain-stock of old customs, "that you did poison the cows, and that you have the evil eye—now, what would happen you, if you neglected to give the water to Miss Tabby's ghost?"

"Let us think a minute," she murmured, "it ud be summat like this. Bat's wings ud come up in every drop of onion broth I makes, an' mouses' tails mix up in my dough—and—"

"Yes, yes," I interrupted. "Perhaps you'll see about my dinner now, Mrs. Gudgeon. We can chat about this some other time."

Evening came, but to my vexation Leather-Breeches was either not at home or refused to take any notice of the repeated bangings with which I assailed his door. Then sauntering idly through the village I did all in my power to loosen aged tongues about the affair, but got no further than the general belief that Miss Tabby's ghost "were sure enough in the pond till Judgment Day, coz she got Mag Thornley drowned for a witch when she wuzn't one." I put the poser to them, that an innocent party by the prescribed formula was compelled to drown, but got the invariable reply: "Righteous good-livin' folk don't perfess to onriddle such doin's."

Ole Leather-Breeches don't go to church—he might arnser 'ye that, mister!"

Remembering it was the anniversary of the affair, I resolved to keep a midnight vigil over the pond; but, alas! though I set my alarm-clock to rouse me at 11.30, I failed to hear it, sleeping soundly till morning.

A loud knocking aroused me from my slumber. A country yokel stood beneath my bedroom window.

"Old Leather-Breeches be a-dyin', and wants you partickler, mister!"

"Dying!" I gasped, slipping into my clothes, and hastening to the dingy alley.

The poor old man was stretched on a heap of rags, and motioned me to shut the door.

"I baint wantin' they breeches o' yourn!" he gasped painfully, "for Beady-Eyes 'ave gone down to the ghostisy at larst—yes, good mister, at larst!"

"What mean you?" I asked, a sickening dread at my heart.

"Larst night," he grinned, "at twelve o' the clock, I hid behind the old stocks, an' watched. She come, she did, an' I let out a fearsome yell as she pitched th' bottle in th' middle o' th' pond. The water ain't much more'n shallow," he then whispered, "but she stumbled an' fell in, an' she never come out. They'll find Beady-Eyes in the thick mud. Ay, young mister," he exclaimed gleefully, "Miss Tabby's ghostisy ain't no more!"

Then he fell back.

"Jeremy Flint," I whispered in his ear, "you loved Maggie Thornley, did you?"

"By heaven—I did, mister—poor, poor cruel-drowned Maggie—I be a-goin to her, now. I've had—my—"

"Revenge," he would doubtless have added, only breath was flown ere he could murmur the word.

Later on, the whole village were putting their heads together, saying it was queer as two "lovers," who had hated each other like poison for forty years, should have met their death on the same day. So decided a thing is public opinion in the old-world village where I gleaned this story, and so "righteous, good-livin'" are its folks, all my efforts to prove that Leather-Breeches and Mother Gudgeon were sworn enemies were utterly useless.

"It were Mag Thornley as come atween 'em," they insisted. "Farmer Dale, at

the Yew Tree, knows the percise truth on it, but he be uncommon deaf—it baint no good questionin' of him!"

I never made an attempt, preferring to abide by the dying words of poor old Leather-Breeches.

It fell to my lot to attend two inquests, at which my evidence was completely ignored. The jury found that Elizabeth Gudgeon was "accidentally drowned," and that Jeremy Flint died from "natural consequences."

Before I left the village, I engaged a rustic who dived well to search for a bottle in the centre of the pond. After much difficulty he recovered one—the very one that Beady-Eyes had been rinsing at her backyard pump. It was evidence to me that Jeremy Flint had told the truth, but bore no traces of having been uncorked to cool the tongue of Tabitha Dale's Ghost.

The bottle is now on my bedroom mantelshelf, and the water may evaporate by degrees. But the leather-seated breeches that I have stowed away will remind me of Maggie Thornley's "sweet lover" for many a long year.

Poor old Jeremy! A mist creeps into my eyes now and again, when I think of the blissful meeting between himself and the "cruel-drowned one" in the world beyond.

J. A.



CAND. D.

"You apparently expect me to take you everywhere."
"Well, I certainly don't expect you to take anyone else."



AT LINCOLN.

"I'm very fond of attending the opening of flat racing, you know, dear."

"Well, it is certainly a most appropriate place for you to be at."

(Then he was sorry he had taken her there.)

In Lighter Vein.



DURING THE INTERVAL.

"I feel sure you have brought me to this quiet nook to declare your love for me. Bertie dear, let me entreat you, do not, whatever you do, give way to any absurd demonstrations of affection before the guests."

(Bertie didn't—you bet.)

The End of These Things.

"A knowledge of ourselves, a faith in friends;
A sympathy for all things born to die."

—L. BLANCHARD.

"DESMOND, old fellow, I should like to hear your opinion of Clifford's letter before I take any further steps in the matter. The responsibility he suggests is one that I do not care to undertake, yet I cannot well refuse, if only for 'old sake's sake.' Of course, he had a certain claim upon me in the past, but since he accepted this foreign appointment we have not kept in touch; in fact, I have not heard from him for years. He evidently read my last article in the journal and seems determined, in spite of the objections I urged therein, to place his wife under my charge. But read his letter, and then you will know as much as I do for the present."

"Villa Castiglione, Florence,
July 28th, 1892."

"DEAR OLD DUNCAN,—What an age since it is I last wrote you! But as I pen your name thoughts of the old days—happy old days—come crowding into my memory, bringing with them regrets, not a few, that those good times may not come again."

"Nearly eighteen years have passed since we 'chummed' it together in Bloomsbury, and despite my journeyings to and from the old country I have missed you each time. Why, I wonder?"

"Of course I have frequently heard of you and the new departure you have made in your profession. For my own part I must confess to have always felt a sneaking regard for and belief in the curative properties of animal magnetism and kindred sciences, and your recent masterly article on the subject in one of the scientific monthlies struck me as especially well written and to the point, and made me a thorough convert to your new scientific ideas."

"If, as you suggest, hypnotism can be made a remedial agent of such high value, more especially where heart and lung affections render the employment of anaesthetics dangerous, a wide field of usefulness undoubtedly lies before you. You may smile at this scientific preamble, and wonder when I am coming to the real subject of my letter, for such point there must be, you will say, after my long silence."

"The real fact of the matter, to which the above is but an introduction is this:

"I am going to ask a favour of you—a favour that may, perhaps, upset your plans and cause you to vote me an unmitigated bore, or worse."

"But revenons à nos moutons. Your good friend, old Dr. Desmond, no doubt told you, when he rejoined you after his brief sojourn in Florence last year, that I had married Queenie Poulton—you know the family. For some months now my dear wife has been under the physicians' care. But the local medicos, either do not understand her case, or keep it hanging about, for selfish motives, as they seem unable to do anything for her trouble except the constant use of anaesthetics, which I feel assured are gradually doing her more harm than good."

"An English doctor who happened to be visiting here has advised an immediate return to England, with a systematic course of electric baths."

"I am unfortunately compelled to remain here for at least some months longer, though I have asked for a holiday. As Queenie must leave at once I have decided to send her in charge of an old servant of the family; but to whom to send her has been a great worry to me until your name in that medical journal recalled the fact of curative mesmerism being your specialité. Will you relieve my mind of this great anxiety? Take charge of her, get her comfortably settled near town; take *carte blanche* in this matter, old man; in fact, consider her your special charge."

"Our great friendship in the past gives me every confidence in your willingness, and I believe that in placing her in your hands I am doing all that—humanly speaking—mortal skill can effect for her."

"I will, upon receipt of a wire from you accepting the trust, let you know fully time of arrival, etc."

"Do let me hear from you at once, to relieve my terrible anxiety."

"And believe me to be,

"Yours, as of old,

"TOM CLIFFORD."

Dr. Desmond read and re-read the letter, and yet gave no sign; but leaning back in his chair he closed his eyes, and seemed wishful to forget his surroundings entirely.

Some ten minutes or so passed thus silently, then rousing himself he meditatively rolled a cigarette between his long white fingers.

To Duncan this silence was becoming oppressive, and he laid down the unlighted cigarette which Dr. Desmond had handed him, and said:

"Desmond, you know now, and have known for years the longings I have felt for a really fair trial of my powers; but you have always contended that the things of this world would prove too much for me; that the sensual was yet too dominant in my

nature for these eyes to pierce the veil which hides the Great To-be. You also told me that I might attain what I desired if I could only have a sensitive subject sufficiently under control."

"Duncan, dear friend—ay, more than friend, son!—why persist in this intense desire for occult wisdom when you know so well that your uncontrolled human passions, however tight a rein you may keep upon them, will always bar the way to a complete success—ay, more, must make it positively dangerous for you to seek to enter the charmed circle, to gain possession of the Great Secret?"

"Why do I persist in my desire?" repeated Sinclair. "Because a something within me urges me on—on towards the hidden, dark unknown; a something that bids me imperatively to go forward—a positive thirst to read plainly the riddles of life and death. Sometimes, old friend, when this magnetic influence is on me I feel almost beside myself by the consciousness of my mighty power—this marvellous force which compels even nature to disclose her inmost secrets."

"Yes," said Dr. Desmond. "Mesmerism is undoubtedly an almighty lever, against which nothing apparently can stand. You have—fortunately or unfortunately remains to be proved—this strange power. Heaven grant that you may rightly use it. Remember it is but a turn of the wheel which directs your power to the good or to the bad."

"Why, Desmond, you surely cannot think for one single moment that I would abuse this marvellous gift?"

"No, my boy; I do not believe you would do so consciously. Still, such a possibility should be kept in mind. For health and life, holy aspirations, and desires may be transmitted by a hypnotist who is pure in heart and thought, so also is there a reverse side to the picture. The germs of good or evil may have lain for years unsuspected. But they are there. The mesmeric rapport calls them into activity for good or evil, and these likewise may be transmitted."

"Do you say this to frighten me, old friend? Surely there is no need to suggest such terrible possibilities in connection with myself and Clifford's wife?"

"Duncan, forgive me; but you must permit an old man—one who has had all these battles to fight before you were born—to advise you. Forgive me if I seem doubtful of your strength. I do not mean to be; for I believe you to be true of heart, and I know that Queenie Clifford is as pure as she is beautiful. Only keep your desires pure, then your influence over her must be of benefit, and you will have the joy of restoring her to her husband cured."

Duncan Sinclair did not answer his old friend. He left his seat and walked restlessly up and down the room, his mind tormented by agitating and conflicting emotions. Then suddenly he turned.

"Desmond," said he, "what kind of woman is Queenie Clifford? I have but a very faint recollection of her."

"A woman in a thousand!"

"Does Tom love her, do you think?"

"Most fondly, I believe. In fact, it is a thorough love-match!"

Then there was silence again. Presently Sinclair spoke.

"Desmond, will you relieve me of part of my charge? Will you, who know her so well, meet her at Dover and see her safe? Prepare her in the best way possible for what is to follow. You will considerably relieve me if you will do this. You know how greatly I am pressed for time just now."

"I will do all that you require," replied the doctor as he prepared to leave the apartment. Then a thought seemed to strike him, for he walked slowly back to his seat. "You have no misgiving, Duncan, as to results, eh?"

A warm flush flooded the face of the younger man as he replied somewhat testily:

"If there is any power in me Queenie Clifford shall be cured. She shall be released from her painful bondage."

"A woman's soul

Most soft, yet strong."

—C. KINGSLEY.

A sweet, serious, winning face, to which the traces of pain, bravely borne, gave a pathetic dignity.

There was something in the curves of the ripe, red lips inexpressibly bewitching, whilst the "star-like sorrows" of the large grey eyes appealed to one's highest feelings.

"I hope you will cure me, Dr. Sinclair. Tom has often spoken to me of your wonderful power, and how clever you are. Oh, I do hope you will do me good, for his sake."

"I am confident of success, dear Mrs. Clifford; but I shall want you to put the most implicit faith in every means I may employ, that will go a long way towards effecting what we all desire for you."

"Oh, I know something of mesmerism! I have read it up, lately, so I am full of faith in your power to relieve me."

Suddenly without warning the sweet face became drawn with pain, and the beautiful eyes suffused with tears.

Her agony was evidently excruciating, and Sinclair, with the calm deliberation of the professional man took her hand, at the same time fixing his gaze upon her and concentrating his will power and trying the effect of mesmeric passes.

For some little time no effect whatever was perceptible, then

slowly, very slowly she sank back on her couch restfully and evidently eased.

"Don't be worried, Tom, dear," she whispered as she lost unconsciousness.

"Poor girl," said Dr. Desmond. "She evidently imagines her husband is by her side. How fondly she must love him."

Three months later. It was evening, when all the heat and turmoil of the day was over, and the full-faced moon poured her silver glory down over the earth with tranquil radiance.

It was after dinner, and Duncan Sinclair was seated alone in his study, immersed in thought.

There was a step outside his room; it came nearer. He rose and opened the door.

Queenie Clifford was there.

She walked as one asleep, as one in a dream. He saw that she was in pain. Her face was deathly white.

"You are in pain?" he said.

"I am in great agony," she replied. "You will take it away," she said, with a pathetic little smile, as she sank into a lounge by the window.

Without a word, the physician paramount over everything, he stood over her and began the passes—passes that so easily brought ease and comfort to the pain-wrung form before him.

"Tell me when you feel less pain," he said very quietly, "then I will cease, and you will be able to have a little quiet sleep."

Presently she smiled.

"The pain has quite gone now," and closing her eyes she was soon sleeping peacefully. There was no fear, no care in her face. Her lips had regained their full tender curves, and her cheeks once more showed their delicate rosebud tint.

Sinclair's heart swelled with conscious pride.

He had brought her ease. But his heart beat furiously, and he moved away from the lounge vainly trying to crush back the human impulse which would not allow him to gaze at that fair woman's classic form without emotion.

Why was this?

"Was this the stoic calm, the passionless indifference of the philosopher? Was this his boasted chivalry?"

Again he returned towards her. How perfect, how exquisite the curves of her rounded figure, the warm, soft cheek he longed to—kiss. Ay, kiss it!

Queenie! fit name for such a regal creature. Queenie! sweet word. Oh! that he might speak it aloud. He must! he will!

"Queenie!"

Her sweet lips seemed to move, responsive to his call.

"Ah, my darling," he cried, forgetting friends, honour—everything in the heat of his mad passion, "you are mine—mine! Fate gives you to me. You are mine by right of conquest."

She had raised her face, and smiled on him. His breath came quickly, and he slipped to the floor beside the lounge, and knelt by her side, his face close—as though drawn by some strange magnetism—to hers.

"Queenie, I love you!"

And their lips met in a passionate caress and part.

"Queenie, tell me; do you love me?"

She whispered: "When I am with you I am very happy, and all my suffering of body and mind leave me. You seem my master."

Presently, however, she fixes her eyes upon him, her whole face transfigured; then sobs shook her voice.

This was the moment for which Sinclair had longed, but hardly dared to hope for—the moment when Tom Clifford should become a shadow to his wife, and he, Duncan Sinclair, the living reality. Then, when victory seemed secure, the enemy came in like a flood.

For the first time Queenie Clifford appeared to realise their situation, and covering her face with her hands she sobbed out her anguish.

"Tom! Tom! come to me! Oh, come in heaven's name, and break the spell that is on me, and make me your own true wife once more!"

Sinclair, startled by her impassioned outburst, rose, almost expecting her prayer would be answered, and looked nervously round; but the room was as it had been, only darker, for the light was fast fading.

Pale and exhausted, with wide open, unseeing eyes, she at length sank back into unconsciousness.

The silence was undisturbed for some minutes; when a step outside roused her, and with a long shriek of horror, as though she had been a dead woman recalled to life, she started from the lounge and walked towards the door.

The magnetic influence was broken, the sightless look was gone.

"Tom!" she cried, "I have been dreaming. Now I am awake! I love you, and you only! Husband, come to me!"

Her shrill voice echoed through the house, then as it died away into silence she looked round as one suddenly aroused from sleep, as one uncertain of their way through the darkness.

She stood thus, blindly groping, when suddenly the door opened and her husband clasped her in his arms, as he cried, "My queen, I have come to you!"

For one brief moment they stood thus, locked in each other's arms in a fond embrace, heart to heart; then her clasp became weak, weaker, and then relaxing altogether she would have fallen, had not loving arms supported her to the lounge.

Looking into the dear face for an explanation, though no explanation was needed now, the tiny reddish stream issuing from the silent lips told only too well all that his faithful heart would ever need to know. F. A. W.



Fond Uncle (unaware that he is looking at his nephew's bills): "You seem to be sought after a good deal, George, my boy?" George (who has been going it): "Yes, by Jove! I'm in very great request just now, I can assure you, uncle."

A Severe Test of Faith.

FIRST THEOSOPHIST: "This settles it; I resign from the society."

Second Theosophist: "What's the matter?"

FIRST THEOSOPHIST: "Why, one of my tenants has gone off without paying his rent, and left a note saying he would try to square up with me at some future existence."

* * *

The Dutiful Husband.

HE'S living now somewhere up in the stars,
And never again will he tease her.

At Christmas she bought him a box of cigars,
And he smoked a couple to please her.

* * If any of our readers have an idea for an invention, they would do well to seek the advice of our Patent Editor. All communications should be addressed to the Patent Editor of SKETCHY BITS, Caxton House, Gough Square, Fleet Street; and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed for reply.



SOLD AGAIN !

Mary Jane to Sarah Jane (after crossing muddy road): "Well, I'm blowed! blest if it ain't only a bloomin' poster after all."



TOO MUCH FOR HIM.

"I 'biked' it to Windsor and back yesterday with Mr. Spindleshanks; he's in bed, unable to move this morning."

"How's that—got knocked down?"

"No, knocked up!"

Winners of the Victoria Cross.

No. XIX. — LIEUT. GERALD GRAHAM, V.C., ROYAL ENGINEERS, CRIMEA, 18th JUNE, 1855 (NOW GENERAL SIR GERALD GRAHAM, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.).

IN my ninth sketch I gave a brief account of the episode which won for this gallant soldier the distinction of the Victoria Cross. It was when he was a mere youth of twenty-four that he was engaged on the fatal 18th June, 1855, in the unsuccessful attack on the Redan. When the headstrong and badly arranged attack of the British was repulsed, his first thought was for the unfortunate wounded, and in spite of the most terrific gun-fire he was the means of rescuing—at the imminent risk of his own life—the lives of many officers and men, with the assistance of J. Perie, V.C., and others.

But this is a long while ago, and people begin to forget the Crimea, with all its horrors and its records of heroism and self-devotion.

It is as Graham of Kassassin, of Tel-el-Kebir, and Suakin that people remember him best.

The Battle of Kassassin, which I described at length in one of my earlier sketches, followed quickly on the bombardment and capture of Alexandria. The force detailed for this service was under the command of General Graham, and was composed of the Duke of Cornwall's and the York and Lancaster regiments, some hundreds of the Royal Marine Artillery, some detachments of the 4th and 7th Dragoon Guards—only a little over fifty—scarcely eighty mounted infantry, and two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery. The whole force did not exceed a thousand men of all arms, against a very large force of Egyptians. One day was allowed for rest, and then, on the morning of August 28th, 1882, the Egyptians tried to turn the ridge behind which General Graham had posted his right wing. Two of their heavy guns were brought up on railway trucks to within 4,000 yards of the British troops, and it is unquestionable that, had their artillery been better served, our losses would have been very severe. They did not for some reason or another, however, persist in the assault on this side; but about half-past four they began a most resolute attack, endeavouring to overlap the English left front.

The Egyptians had twelve guns, which were served well, and the position of the British began to be serious—their two wings being separated by the canal. However, General Graham's skill was aided by his good fortune. He communicated by heliograph to General Drury Lowe, and obtained quickly the reinforcements of which he was in need. In need truly, for the ammunition of the 13-pounders was quite exhausted. The new arrivals came up just in time to engage the enemy's skirmishers, as the York and Lancaster regiment were deploying to meet the enemy's attack, and as luck would have it the Royal Marine Artillery were able at this critical juncture to make use of the Krupp gun which they had captured a day or so before at Mahramaaah.

The Egyptians, undismayed, pressed on determinedly, and in the face of a heavy fire from the mounted infantry and dismounted Dragoons threw two or three detachments across the canal.

Darkness was coming on, but the fate of the day was to be quickly settled. Sir Baker Russell came hurrying up with the Household Cavalry, 7th Dragoon Guards, and Horse Artillery; and suddenly bursting from behind the ridge, they rushed headlong upon the Egyptian batteries, sweeping through the infantry and cavalry which supported them, and throwing the whole force into confusion. General Graham, although quite ignorant of what was going on at this point, found it impossible to remain inactive, and he gave an order for a simultaneous advance along the whole line. The Egyptians broke and fled, and were pursued for hours in the darkness by our troops.

Then, after a slight pause, came Tel-el-Kebir, where Gerald Graham was again to the fore.

To describe this battle fully again would be only repetition; but I allude to it because Graham had the honour of taking a distinguished part in this battle, which really ended the mathematically-arranged campaign of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

It was the Highland Brigade on the right and Graham's on the left which stole forth that morning in the dense darkness towards the Egyptian embankments. "Sir Garnet Wolseley, knowing the value of a sudden surprise, ordered that there was to be no preliminary fire. The shadows of the night were to be trusted to veil the advance. It was even said that the men were ordered not to load their rifles, but to close with the foe and decide the battle with the bayonet. But this, of course, in view of subsequent events could not be true. The ruse was successful. On both flanks the British force advanced within a very short distance of the enemy before they were perceived. Dawn, in fact, was just breaking when some five hundred yards in front of the Egyptian left a ridge became suddenly covered with objects black against the pale light. It was Graham's brigade advancing to the fray."

The silence of the dawn was awakened by a single shot from the Egyptian lines, and then from every point blare forth the roar of rifle and cannon. But this was precipitate, for they had not yet seen the main body of the British in the plain below. Presently with a loud cheer the British boys burst upon the foe, and were met by them with a perfect hail of bullets. The Egyptians at first showed a brave front, clustering in dense

masses on the parapets and swarming down the slopes into the trenches, where hundreds of them lay down and fired into the advancing brigade. Our soldiers were all very young, but they exhibited the most perfect steadiness, and when they neared the trenches they leaped right into the middle of the enemy. How they closed with butt and bayonet, and captured the trenches; how the bigger fort behind was stormed; how the whole of the redoubts and entrenchments were in a quarter of an hour in the hands of the British; how the Egyptian army was completely broken up; how the Indian Lancers behaved; and how Cairo was reached in triumph and Arabi Pasha taken prisoner are matters of history which I have described before. But in all the stern work of this day, and its glorious ending, General Graham was to the fore; and he and Alison were the officers who were cheered by the troops after the battle. I have already given—as I have mentioned—a short account of the Redan episode, which won him his V.C.; but in the case of such a man, it was only right to speak of his after-doings. He is still strong and brave and ready, and his name will no doubt be soon heard of again.*

V. St. J.

* Grant's *British Battles*; T. E. Toomey's *Heroes of the Victoria Cross*; D. H. Parry's *Britain's Roll of Glory*, etc., etc.

The Work Problem.

"I DON'T know which it is that tires
A weary mortal most; the work
He really does for them as hires,
Or what he dodges 'round to shirk."

Proof Positive.

SHE: "Do you think Miss Sweeter is so strikingly handsome?"
HE: "I know it. All the other women put in their time picking her to pieces."

For His Health.

WILLIS: "Yes, I've just got back from a fishing trip."
Wallace: "Did you go for your health?"
"I suppose so. I didn't catch any fish."

Naval Engagement.

HE: "I don't suppose you ever saw a naval engagement?"
She: "Oh, yes, I have. My sister was engaged to be married to a lieutenant in the navy once."

He Needs a Change.

"WHY is it that Bumply thinks that we are a race of degenerates?"
"Because he lives alone, and spends his time in self-communion."

Trial of an Artist.

SYMPATHISING FRIEND: I am awfully sorry to hear that your work was rejected."
Poster Artist: "I don't mind disclosing the secret to you; I know you will keep it. The fact is I am colour-blind by gaslight, and I painted a group of green trees, thinking all the time that I was using pure red."

Vacation Joys.

UPGUARDSON: "You and your family spent the summer on your fruit farm this year, did you? What did you raise?"
Atom: "One case of strawberries and six cases of malaria."

He Was in the Swim.

SHE: "Did your friend get any foreign decorations while abroad?"
He: "Oh, yes! He got a red nose in Paris and a black eye in London."

Bargain Hunting.

MRS. HUNTER: "I've been in town all the afternoon and feel awfully tired."
Mr. Hunter: "Undoubtedly, my dear; you do look rather shop-worn."

Handicapped.

"WHAT is versatility?"
"Versatility is having so many talents that you can't get time to make a living with any of them."

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

The Editor of "SKETCHY BITS" will not guarantee the return of any MSS. or Sketches sent on approval, but he will use his best endeavours where stamps are forwarded for the purpose.

Footlight Notes.

Miss Nellie Farren.

THE 17th of March has for ages been memorable in the annals of these isles, and pregnant with events of a more or less stirring character. Honoured as the feast of St. Patrick, every "broth of a boy" throughout the civilised world considers the day consecrated to the memory of the grand ould gentleman who banished all the sarpints from Ireland as a fitting occasion to indulge in mirth and whisky, and, if in a refractory mood, to invite all and sundry to tread on the tail of his coat. The pugnacious element has almost entirely disappeared, and on Thursday next the unsuspecting Saxon will adorn his buttonhole with a sprig of carefully-trimmed clover, foisted upon him by the unscrupulous hawker, with the same amount of pride as the wily Hibernian who has had his supply of the national emblem imported direct from the Emerald Isle.

St. Patrick's Day is now regarded as the annual re-union which helps to cement the good feeling existing between ourselves and the sister isle; and what day could be more happily selected to pay the playgoers' tribute to the high priestess of mirth, who, regardless of nation or party, reigns supreme in the hearts of all?

On Thursday afternoon an audience will be gathered within the walls of the National Theatre as brilliant as any ever previously assembled there. The demand for seats has even exceeded all expectations, and hundreds who would have desired to witness the benefit performance for "our Nellie" will have to content themselves by reading the accounts published in Friday morning's papers. The newspaper-paragraphs, as well as the usual methods of advertising, have made that portion of the public lucky enough to secure seats acquainted with the dramatic feast in store. The entire list of attractions would require more space to detail than is at my disposal, but particular interest will be centred round Sir Henry Irving's recitation, "The Dream of Eugene Aram," the mad scene from *Hamlet*, introducing Miss Ellen Terry as Ophelia, and Miss Genevieve Ward as the Queen. *Trial by Jury* will have quite a wonderful caste, while the subordinate parts of the members of the jury and the bridesmaids will be sustained by leading members of the profession; and amongst the lady visitors in court will be recognised Lady Bancroft, Miss Lydia Thompson, Miss Kate Santley, Miss Constance Loseby, and many other public favourites seldom now seen on the stage. After the scene from *The Babes in the Wood*, Miss Ellaline Terriss as Fairy Queen will introduce the harlequinade, in which about forty prominent members of the profession will appear. At the conclusion of the performance Miss Farren will hold a reception, and receive the hearty congratulations of her friends. Although Miss Farren has long been regarded as the pet of the Gaiety boys, her success all over the kingdom and in Australia and America has just been as emphatic as in London.

Miss Farren, who is the daughter of Henry Farren, and granddaughter of William Farren the elder, was born in Lancashire, and at the early age of seven years made her *début* at the old Victoria Theatre, now a temperance concert hall, playing Genie of the Ring in *Dick Whittington*. Her juvenile experience had a short duration, as she was soon afterwards withdrawn from public life in order to be educated. In 1864, her schooldays over, Miss Farren made her reappearance on the stage at the Olympic Theatre, under the management of Mr. Horace Wigan. Here she confined herself to comedy rôles, having, in fact, no aspirations for burlesque. Once she appeared in Shakespeare, playing the clown in

Twelfth Night, and singing all the original classic music. Miss Farren's earlier successes have been almost obliterated by the brilliancy of her later triumphs. Yet many old playgoers can remember the distinct mark she made as Lydia Languish, was exquisitely human as Nan in *Good For Nothing*, and drew tears from the audience by her pathetic portrayal of Jo, and again as the luckless Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Her Sam Willoughby in the *Ticket-of-Leave Man* has never been surpassed. When Mr. Hollingshead transformed the Strand Music Hall into the Gaiety Theatre, and established the home of burlesque, Miss Patty Josephs was retained for burlesque lead, Miss Farren being engaged for comedy parts. But when the former lady left, "our Nellie" was chosen to succeed her, and has since been the leading spirit in some thirty or forty productions. Until within a few years ago, when illness cut short her brilliant career, she was wont to sing and dance with all her old dash and spirit, and during her Australian tour played cricket with all the healthful vigour of a school girl. A double page illustration, showing Miss Farren in some of her favourite characters, published in this issue of SKETCHY BITS, will form a pleasing souvenir of an important occasion.



FEASIBLE.

"Now, Mabel, can you tell me the reason why Lady Jane Grey was imprisoned and afterwards beheaded at the Tower?"
"Yes; because she couldn't jolly well help it."

No Reason to Hang Back.

"Come and take lunch with me to-day," said one business man to another.

"I can't. I've an appointment."

"Can't you break it?"

"No; a man has promised to come to my office between one and two, and pay me some money."

"Oh; then that's all right. I'll order the lunch all the same. He won't come."

* * *

Wanted a Life Term.

A YOUNG man in the Treasury department, who took an examination recently for promotion, ran up against a curious question, but was equal to the occasion, and his ready reply will doubtless stand him in good stead when his average is made up. The question asked was this:

"How long do you expect to remain in the Civil Service?"

"Until death do us part," was the reply, unhesitatingly written down.

* * *

"THEY are making a great fuss in the papers about horseless carriages," said one papa while wheeling their babies.

"Just as if they were something new!" chuckled the other as the two men separated.

* * *

Her Preference.

"You say you'd give your life for me?"

Her voice was all a-quaver,

"I'd rather that you would," said she,

"Insure it in my favour."

* * *

Explaining It To Him.

HE: "Am I ever to have my way about anything?"

SHE: "Of course! You can have your way when your way is the same as my way; but when our ways are different, then I'll have my way."

* * *

A Sufficient Reason.

BILLECLARK: "Come and dine with me to-morrow night, old boy."

SHIPPENCLARK (doubtfully): "At your boarding-house?"

Billeclark (hotly): "I asked you to dine, didn't I?"



"My dear Maud, you have some very bad habits."
"Well, you won't give me money to buy new ones."

in some days I send you some papers
of three



A MAN OF HIS WORD.

Temperance Advocate: "Now, let me earnestly beg you to come up to the hall on Wednesday evening, and hear Mr. Waterhead lecture on the influence of alcohol on the human frame."

Bill: "Ah! now, anythink like that I do enjoy; but yer see, guv'nor, it's like this. The 'Grafting Harmses' 'as just been done up, and there's goin' to be free drinks on We'n'sday night, an' I promised the landlord that whoever disappointed 'im, I'd be there!"

One Guinea Prize

will be given for the BEST ORIGINAL STORY sent in to SKETCHY BITS. It must be exciting, and contain not more than from 1,600 to 1,800 words. In every case the MS. must be accompanied with the contributor's written authority for the right of production. See notice to Contributors, on page 10.

THE following declaration is to be sent in with MS. :

Name of Story

I hereby guarantee that the story named above is entirely my own composition, and has never appeared in any Journal or Book before.

Name of sender

Address of ditto

Date

Our Prize Story.

WE have decided that the Story, "The Riving of an Oak," is the best sent in this week, and we have accordingly forwarded One Guinea to the author, WILLIAM CONSPARE, c/o Mr. Dan Ward, 3, Bridge Street, Leigh, Lancashire.

The Riving of an Oak.

"COLIN, will this grievance ever cease to trouble me?"

"If you were referring to the rain, mother mine, it is already on the point of ceasing; and I firmly and fully believe that it is suspending its invaluable work expressly to oblige you."

"But the rain is not my grievance. I am not aware that I particularly wish it to stop!"

"Then the tearful element must have misconstrued your wishes, for it has this instant terminated its necessary but decidedly unpleasant career. I hope you will not be so unjust as to accuse the rain of being uncourteous, for when it decided to conclude its recent performance it was undoubtedly under the impression that you wished it to do so."

Laughing gaily, handsome Colin Chalmers turned from the window through which he had been viewing the dismal scene without, and crossed the prettily-furnished room to the fireplace, where he took up his position on the hearthrug, with his feet wide apart, his hands thrust down into the uttermost depths of his trousers pockets, and a good-humoured smile playing about his prepossessing countenance, and twinkling in his merry blue eyes, which looked mischievously down at the matronly figure of Mrs. Chalmers, who, comfortably seated in the recesses of an extensive armchair, was engaged upon an intricate piece of many-coloured needlework.

"You know perfectly well," she said, plying her needles with increased rapidity, "that the rain never entered my thoughts. My grievance concerns yourself, or rather, your position!"

"My position!" Colin echoed, with most ludicrous mock dignity, as he took his hands out of his pockets and allowed his feet to come within a reasonable distance of each other. "Things have come to a pretty pass, when I cannot adopt an easy attitude without being told that my position grieves you. You mean to insinuate, I suppose, that the attitude was lacking in grace?"

"I meant to say, Colin, that my grievance concerns your position as master of Beech Dene. Comparatively speaking, I am caring the end of my earthly journey; and you know full well how fervently I hope to see you marry ere I am called away."

"Mater, to give you a moment's pleasure I would willingly fall into a ditch, or into a horsepond, or into anything else that I could fall into with reasonable comfort; but when you ask me to fall in love—well, I think you are too vindictive."

"I regret that the joys of matrimony impress you so unfavourably." She tried hard not to smile, but the result was a miserable failure. "Of course," she added more seriously, "I would not have you marry where you do not love."

"And observation and experience, chiefly experience"—with a wicked smile—"have doubtless convinced you that a man cannot fall in love when he pleases. Cupid has a nasty habit of hurling his shafts when one is least expecting them. Love, in fact, is very much like an area-grating that has been carelessly left open; a man falls into one as unwittingly as he falls into the other; he has no idea that either of the two man-traps is there until he is hopelessly in its depths."

"I grant that a man cannot love at will; but that which grieves me is the industrious manner in which you purposely avoid Cupid's arrows."

"There you wrong me. I have gone to endless trouble trying to induce the winged imp to make me miserable."

Colin said this with the injured air of a man who considered himself worthy of honourable mention in the *Book of Martyrs*.

"You have gone to endless trouble!" Mrs. Chalmers exclaimed. "I marvel that your conscience will let you say so!"

"But that is a fact; the trouble I have put myself to is literally endless."

For a few seconds Colin enjoyed his mother's pained astonishment at what seemed to be a falsehood, and then resumed:

"For that which has no beginning cannot have an end, and thus, as the trouble referred to has neither beginning nor end, it is indeed endless."

Mrs. Chalmers looked relieved.

"I am pleased to find that you have not yet fallen a victim to the sin of prevarication," she said.

"I don't see why you should be pleased on that account, if it is really your wish that I should become a lover."

Mrs. Chalmers looked up questioningly.

Colin explained: "If a man would be a lover he must, above all things, be an accomplished liar."

Mrs. Chalmers' amazement almost caused her to gasp for breath.

"Imagine the effect that would be produced," Colin went on, "if the truthful lover—assuming that such a freak exists—was to tell his ladylove that her feet, considering they were so large, didn't look at all bad; and that her eyes had rather a nice expression in them, though they certainly did squint a little! The girl would begin to think, and not without reason, that she was being wooed by a lunatic! Yes, 'lover' and 'liar' are synonymous and inseparable terms. And the uglier the girl the more expert the liar—that is, the lover—must be. In short, every lover who knows his business ought to be labelled 'The Antipodes of Truth personified.'"

Mrs. Chalmers stared open-mouthed at the upright figure on the hearthrug. Colin, for his part, beamed down upon her from the top of his six-foot frame with characteristic joyousness.

"To return to the subject in question," he said at length, "I shall marry some day, I suppose, sooner or later; but I don't see why you should hurry me to the sacrifice in the pitiless way you do."

"If I am to have the pleasure of seeing you marry—if this dream of mine is to be realised—the sooner the better, for I am getting on in years. There is much cause for hurry; but you do not see it as I do, for you are young—you have your future before you."

"If I am not mistaken, people usually do have their futures before them. Indeed, a man who had his future behind him would be something of a curiosity."

"Colin, will you ever be serious?"

"I shall, inevitably; for, as I have already said, I shall marry, sooner or later."

Mrs. Chalmers tried to look severe, but she failed as completely as she had done before.

"And you may possibly marry," she said, "of your own accord, earlier than you imagine. The afternoon train from London will bring Miss Edna Verril to us."

"And you think she will turn my head?"

"As I have not seen her since she was a very little girl, I cannot say; but I hope she will."

"How spiteful you are! Has Miss Verril been abroad, that you have not seen her for so long?"

"Yes; she returned to England only a month ago. Since her return she has been staying in London with her aunt, the Hon. Mrs. Claverton. It is at my request that Mrs. Claverton is sending her niece to us."

"Um-m!" Colin was lighting a cigar. "When she arrives here," he said, crossing to the window, "I shall make myself conspicuously insignificant."

And looking back at Mrs. Chalmers with one of his irresistible smiles, he stepped out of the room and was soon lost to sight in the gardens with which Beech Dene was environed.

Happy, heart-free Colin Chalmers! Happy—Colin would have said—because he was heart-free.

Five days have elapsed since Miss Edna Verril arrived at Beech Dene, the pleasantly situated residence (it was on the borders of Warwickshire and Worcestershire) of Mrs. Chalmers and her bachelor son.

In the gardens, on the sixth day of Miss Verril's visit, a man and a woman walked together.

The man was tall, well-proportioned, and much handsomer than the ordinary run of men. The woman was a vision, so far as beauty was concerned. In one respect, this particular vision excelled all others—it was not composed of a baseless fabric, it was most charmingly substantial.

The man was serious and eager; the woman was gay and, to all appearances, indifferent; but her gaiety and indifference seemed to be affected, and were interspersed with frequent periods of evident anxiety, which she employed in narrowly watching her companion's earnest countenance. As the woman's mirth increased or diminished, the man's frown deepened or faded. The man himself never laughed, though he occasionally forced himself to smile.

For a somewhat lengthy period they wandered aimlessly about the gardens until, finding that it was a difficult matter to avoid meeting the gardeners, and at the same time keep out of the range of the house windows, they entered a shady alcove, the man audibly vowing that there would be bloodshed if anyone dared to invade that portion of the grounds.

When they ultimately emerged from the seclusion of the leafy arbour, it was evident that a satisfactory understanding had been arrived at, for the man's frown had entirely disappeared. Furthermore, when the woman smiled now, the man smiled also; and when the man was serious, the woman listened attentively, and with fitting gravity.

As they entered the pretty dining-room together, a short time afterwards, Mrs. Chalmers received them with a bright smile of welcome. Unconsciously, the elder woman's gaze rested upon the girl much longer than was necessary, and there was keen curiosity mixed with her evident admiration of the oval face and slender shapely figure. The girl's cheeks flushed, and she appeared to be considerably more embarrassed than the occasion warranted.

Throughout the meal, which was interspersed with divers acts of clumsiness by the girl and the young man, Mrs. Chalmers talked with unwonted vivacity; indeed, we may say that she supplied the whole of the conversation herself; for neither of the young people ever ventured a remark which did not immediately concern the weather outside or the viands on the table. Their behaviour would have caused one to infer that they were perfect strangers and had never seen each other before the commencement of the meal; their conduct, in fact, implied that they had not even been introduced to each other, and were not particularly desirous that they should be.

But though Mrs. Chalmers was obliged to wear glasses when she wished to read, she clearly saw and understood the true state of affairs. She rejoiced within herself in no measured degree. Her dream, she thought, was about to be realised; for the girl, who has thus far been nameless, was Miss Edna Verril, and the man—we hope the reader's amazement will not be fatal—the man was Colin Chalmers! Yea, verily, it was Colin the Bachelor!

Yes, Colin was a lover; but, if anyone had told him that he was a liar, we fear he would not have appreciated the humour of the statement.

When the various members of the Beech Dene household rose from their slumbers on the following morning, and prepared to don the particular robes which distinguished their particular offices, they did it with the frantic hurry which was the usual consequence of the inevitable indulgence in a few extra winks in bed. But the hasty toilets would have been made in still greater haste if they had known that a surprise—or, rather, a series of surprises—were quietly awaiting to be discovered, and commented upon according to their merits.

These surprises were rendered all the more startling by the fact that the past week had been an exceptionally quiet one; for, though it had been marked by the advent of Miss Verril and Colin's subsequent love affair, the servants had often remarked that a bit of excitement was needed to liven the place up a little. And a bit of excitement they got.

Coming after the stagnation of the past six days, the remarkable string of events which occurred on this particular day, and which succeeded each other at varying intervals, startled Beech Dene much as the unexpected reports of an automatic repeating gun would have startled the primitive savages.

First of all it was found that the house had been entered some time during the night, and almost every portable article of value carried away. Consequent upon this discovery, the frenzied rushing about of the servants brought to light a state of things which almost unseated Mrs. Chalmers' reason.

Amongst other things which seemed unaccountably strange, it

was ascertained that Colin was nowhere to be found, either in the house or in the grounds.

A horse was missing from the stables.

Miss Verril, too, had mysteriously disappeared.

There was excitement enough in all this to satisfy even the servants. The oldest of them could not remember any incident that had caused such consternation as now reigned at Beech Dene.

The police arrived, and commenced investigations; but when they finally took their departure, the mystery—or mysteries—were as perplexing, if not more so, than before. With most amazing intelligence they agreed with Mrs. Chalmers that a robbery had been committed, that a horse was missing, that Colin had disappeared, and that Miss Verril had also vanished; but this, they said, was all the light they were able to throw upon the matter.

There was, therefore, nothing for it but to wait patiently for the arrival of the detective who had been wired for.

In the afternoon, however, one of Mrs. Chalmers' many causes for anxiety was removed: Colin returned, on the missing horse.

When asked where he had been, he laughingly evaded the question; but Mrs. Chalmers afterwards learned that he had been to Worcester, and had visited a certain jeweller's establishment, with the result that when he turned his horse's head homewards he had in his pocket an engagement ring.

When Mrs. Chalmers mentioned the robbery it was clear that Colin knew nothing of it. When he started out that morning, he said, he had certainly missed several things from his room, but he inferred that they had merely been mislaid.

But even the burglary did not cause Colin to forget the object of his visit to Worcester; he wished to dispose of the precious ring that lay concealed in the secret depths of his pocket. Accordingly he asked where he might find Miss Verril.

When he was told that she had disappeared, Mrs. Chalmers thought he would have fallen.

The day was fast waning and merging into night. Already the dark shadows reared themselves weirdly in the corners and deep recesses of the lofty apartment. Mrs. Chalmers, with her elbow on the arm of her chair and her head leaning on her hand, gazed pensively at the flicker-

ing fire in the grate, and glanced intermittently towards the window, where Colin's gigantic form was silhouetted against the patch of grey sky which was visible through the open casement.

The eerie stillness that had pervaded the room for the past half-hour and the gloomy thoughts that filled the minds of Mrs. Chalmers and her son were simultaneously cut short by a brisk tap at the door, followed by the entrance of a maid with two visiting cards.

Mrs. Chalmers inclined the two neat slips of pasteboard to the light of the fire, and read aloud:

"Mrs. Claverton, and—and—" She paused, and an expression of awe and wonderment crept over her face as she completed her broken sentence—"and Miss Edna Verril."

"Then she has come back?"

As he spoke Colin turned from the window with suddenly acquired energy,

"Show them in," he said to the maid. "Now," he vigorously continued, his eyes sparkling with anticipation, "we may possibly have this mystery cleared up. At all events, it is clear

(Concluded on page 18.)



"There was one thing I could buy as cheap at the seaside as I could at home."
"What in the world was that?"
"Postage stamps!"

NELLIE FARREN



"GOOD LUCK!"

[From Photographs by the London Stereoscopic Co.]

that Miss Verril had no hand in the burglary, as we were foolish enough to fear, or she would never have come back."

His eyes were riveted expectantly on the doorway and his left hand toyed feverishly with a certain ring he had in his pocket. After all, he jubilantly thought, his love affair was to have a happy ending; that ring would be given to her for whom it had been intended. He snapped the fingers of his right hand with impatience. Would they never come?

Mrs. Claverton entered at last, but Colin scarcely saw her; he had eyes for no one but the girl who now stepped into the room.

With outstretched arms he rushed eagerly towards her; but he suddenly checked himself, and the impassioned words of greeting died on his lips. He stood transfixed with bewilderment, and before he could recover himself Mrs. Chalmers had finished her somewhat effusive welcome of her one time school friend, and Mrs. Claverton had taken the pale, shrinking girl by the hand and drawn her out of the shadow in which she had modestly been standing.

"My niece—Miss Edna Verril," said Mrs. Claverton.

It almost seemed as if that frail, timid creature was possessed of the petrifying powers of snaky-haired Medusa, for Mrs. Chalmers was as stupefied with astonishment as Colin had been.

"This—this is not the girl," she said at last, "whom we have entertained for the past week, and who came to us with a letter of introduction from you!"

"That is only too true," Mrs. Claverton rejoined.

Mrs. Chalmers glanced uneasily at Colin, whose face had become strangely white.

"I am afraid there has been some terrible mistake here," she said.

"Not so much a mistake," Mrs. Claverton replied, "as a deliberately perpetrated fraud."

After a brief interval, she gave the following explanatory statement:

"Whilst my niece was waiting at the terminus for her train, on the day you expected her to arrive here, a cabman hurriedly entered the waiting-room and inquired for Miss Verril, to whom he handed a note, which purported to be from me, and which stated that I had been taken suddenly ill, and that I requested Miss Verril's immediate return. All unsuspecting, my niece entered the cab which was waiting outside the station, and was quickly driven, not to my house, but to a low haunt in a filthy part of the city, where she was forcibly detained.

"The maid who accompanied my niece to the station, remained there, ostensibly to look after the luggage, but in reality for a purpose of her own, for when the train entered the station she boarded it with Miss Verril's luggage, and came on here to Beech Dene, where, I learn, she has successfully personated my niece for a period of six days, and repaid your hospitality by robbing you.

"The fraud was admirably conceived throughout. There was absolutely nothing to cause me to suspect that anything was wrong. Until my niece returned home this morning, having been released from the vile den in which she had been detained for six days, I was under the impression that she was here with you at Beech Dene, whereas she had never been out of London.

"As you have doubtless observed, the girl whom you received as Miss Verril does not in the least resemble my niece; but the impostor easily learned that neither you nor Colin had seen Miss Verril since she was a child, and accordingly concluded that there would be no great risk in impersonating her.

"This misguided girl, I have subsequently learned, hires herself out as a servant for the express purpose of aiding her confederates in their nocturnal profession by leaving a door or a window conveniently open, and if this last scheme of theirs, which has succeeded only too well, had not been proposed by one of her clever associates, and acted upon by the gang, my own house would have been plundered instead of yours."

"Hold," said Colin, choking back the lump that had risen in his throat. That one word cost him a terrible effort, and was spoken in a voice that had lost all its former gaiety of tone. "Have I heard aright?" he said, raising his now lustreless eyes despairingly to Mrs. Claverton's. "The girl who came here last Thursday . . . she is—"

"A professional burglar," said Mrs. Claverton.

The oak was riven.

Colin staggered blindly to the window, and for a few painful minutes leaned silently against the sash.

"Mother."

His voice was strangely subdued, and the word was spoken with indescribable tenderness, but the poignant anguish that was embodied in that brief utterance went to Mrs. Chalmers' heart with a sickeningly painful effect.

She stepped towards the motionless figure at the window and gently took his listless hand in her own. She endeavoured to look into his face, but it was turned resolutely from her.

"My son?"

"Your dream is ended. I shall never marry."

Without once looking back at the pitying face of the one woman who understood and sympathised with him, he was gone.

It was now quite dark, but it was long ere Mrs. Chalmers called for lights.

For a Woman's Sake.

"THERE he goes again!" remarked Dick Price to me one day; "the mysterious man with the paper bag."

I looked out of the hotel window and saw him pass. He was tall, clean-shaven, and of uncertain age, shabbily dressed in check trousers, a faded tail-coat, and a soft felt hat. Under his arm he carried a large brown paper bag.

"I've seen him go by for the past fortnight," continued Dick, "and always with the same parcel. Whatever can he be?"

I confessed myself unable to answer the question; one sees such a variety of strange characters at the seaside.

One afternoon, not long after, I noticed him scanning the list of prices at a place of refreshment on the front, and, feeling in his pocket, apparently to satisfy himself he possessed sufficient to pay for what he should order, saw him go in. Following, out of curiosity, I heard him ask for a cup of tea, and was surprised to notice the tone in which he addressed the waitress was that of a gentleman.

After he had left I asked the dainty serving-maid who he was.

"A gentleman down on his luck," she replied; "but more I don't know. He's down here every year."

By his manner, and everything except his clothes, it was clear he had once done something better than walk about the streets a pitiable object, with his boots down at heel, and I determined to find out more about him.

The two following days he went into the shop at the same hour, always, of course, accompanied with the big brown paper bag, and his order never exceeded a small cup of tea. On the third occasion the proprietor of the establishment, a kindly-hearted man, set some cakes before him.

"These are some new pastries we have in," he remarked; "see what you think of them. We're giving samples to all our customers."

And, to complete the fiction, put similar ones in front of the other people who happened to be in the place.

He ate one, and, as I watched him, I said to myself: "The poor fellow is starving."

The next occasion of my visit I managed to get into conversation with him, and after that we had long chats together on a variety of topics; for he was an educated and well-informed man, but never by any chance did he speak about himself. There was always a certain reserve in the background, which I did not attempt to break through.

The waitress's interest only extended as far as the paper bag.

"What is in it?" she asked one day. "Does it contain his wardrobe, or are there precious jewels inside, that he should hug them so closely to his bosom?"

At length it seems her curiosity was rewarded. One day he appeared unusually flush of money, and asked the proprietor whether they accommodated people for the night. He replied yes, and was about to tell him the usual charges when he purposely halved them. The result was he became a lodger for the night only, and previously to retiring to rest, so I was afterwards told, took a stroll along the front. The waitress went up to his room, ostensibly for the purpose of taking in some clean towels. In a minute she came bouncing down again.

"Eureka!" she cried, "I've solved the mystery."

"What mystery?" he asked.

"Why, the paper bag, of course; he's left it behind! What do you think's inside?"

The proprietor was powerless to guess.

"Nuts!"

"Nuts?"

"Yes; ordinary Barcelona nuts!"

"What does he do with them, then?"

"Why, sells them on the beach, of course!" replied the girl.

I was surprised at the story. I couldn't associate this so-evident gentleman with catering to the wants of small boys on the shingle.

But soon after, when we were sitting over a cup of tea together, he told me his whole history. As I had thought, he was a gentleman, and had made the one mistake of his life when he had married a girl his social inferior. But he loved her dearly and never for a moment thought but what his father would forgive his imprudent marriage. As it turned out, however, the colonel had cut him off with the proverbial shilling, and he was left with a wife, with expensive habits and tastes, absolutely unable to provide for her.

Of course, never having been brought up to commercial pursuits, he found it impossible to earn a livelihood by clerking, so had conceived the notion of installing his wife in a cheap country cottage, while he tramped about from place to place along the coast, hawking nuts on the beach.

Often and often he had come across some of his old college chums, and pulled his hat over his eyes to avoid being recognised. He told me his breakfast consisted of a crust of bread and a drink of water, and his dinner a halfpenny roll and a piece of cheese, while at night he slept on the beach or on one of the public seats, never seeing the luxury of a bed more than once in a month. Somehow or other he managed to exist, and, by dint of screwing and scraping, had been able to send home to his wife a couple of

pounds every week. I confessed my astonishment at his story, but he assured me it was perfectly true.

"And how long is it since you have seen your wife?" I asked.

"Six weeks now, heaven bless her! In a few days I hope to be with her again."

"But why not try and get a berth? With your influence and friends it oughtn't to be a difficult matter."

"I'm too proud," he replied. "My old father will relent some day, and in any case I receive a small legacy in a few years' time. But of course I've anticipated a part of that already."

"And your wife? Isn't she lonely?"

"Oh, no, she has plenty of friends! Lilian was always fond of gaiety and life. I'm telling you this in confidence," and he came closer to me. "She doesn't know what I'm doing for a living; to her and to everyone else I'm a commercial traveller."

I was so impressed with his story that I could scarcely sleep that night for thinking about it.

For a couple of days I saw nothing of "Nuts," as the waitress since her momentous discovery ever after called him. The season was now at its height; the place was crammed with a fashionable throng, for the weather was superb; an Italian sky reigned above, while the sun blazed fiercely hot overhead. Doubtless the colonel's son was doing good business; unless, however, he had gone on to the next town.

I strolled into my usual café in the expectation of seeing him. There was a great run on ices that day, and the not too extensive premises were crammed to their utmost capacity. While this pressure was going on, "Nuts" entered, a couple of hours later than usual, his paper bag empty for once.

Seeing the place full, he was about to leave; but the waitress beckoned him to where I was sitting, behind a screen separating the shop from the kitchen, a position strictly private, but which had been given to me as I was scarcely looked upon as a stranger.

He was looking brighter than I had ever seen him before, having, doubtless, had a good day, and was probably soon to make another flying visit to his wife.

On the other side of the screen a young, fashionably-attired lady, with a gentleman, looking, I thought, not unlike a honeymoon couple, were talking rather loudly, and while "Nuts" was sipping his tea, I could distinctly hear their conversation, as he could also, though not seeing them.

"We shall be crossing the Channel to-morrow, darling," the man was saying.

"How heavenly!" replied the girl; "I'm so longing to see Paris. Someone"—and she laughed—"couldn't take me there if

I were to wait till Doomsday. Very likely he's going home now. I wonder what he'll say when he discovers all."

The colonel's son started and listened as though the voices were familiar.

"Don't refer to him any more," answered the other passionately, "you're his no longer, henceforth you are mine!" and I could see, though my friend could not, the man give her hand an affectionate pressure.

The solitary man by my side rose to his feet to peer behind the screen, but passing his hand across his bewildered brow, sat down again.

"Oh! I never cared for him a jot," continued the girl, "please don't trouble yourself about that; I didn't marry him for love. Things, of course, might have been different if that stupid old boor, his father, hadn't turned up rough and cast him off!"

In another moment they had risen to go, and I heard the man exclaim:

"You're looking lovelier than ever to-day, Lilian!"

At the name "Lilian" my newly-found friend got up excitedly, his eyes starting out of their sockets as he looked to see who the speakers were.

Giving one hasty glance he uttered a wild, unearthly cry, and rushing out of the shop followed their retreating figures in the distance. The people stared in astonishment, but they were not aware, as I was for a certainty, that the man was chasing his runaway wife.

Half-an-hour later he was on the beach. A rough mob were howling and jeering around him, for he was telling them he was the anti-Christ charged with a divine message from God to prepare the world for the coming of His kingdom.

T. B.

LADY: "Why, did you leave your last place?"

Servant Girl: "Because the master kissed me, mum."

Lady: "And you didn't like it, eh?"

Servant Girl: "Oh, I didn't mind it, mum, but the mistress didn't like it!"

* * *

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clearness of the skin will astonish you. Full
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Duffley (who's tyre has run down): "Look here, my man, can you tell me of any place about here where I can get a pump?"

"Wants a pump, do 'ee, mister? Well, th' near'st be in the village. But I say, mister, judgin' by th' looks of 'ee, I should think a pint o' ale 'd 'ee a sight more good."

(And then the procession passed on.)



"Are you very particular at your club?"

"Oh, awfully! we haven't even had the police in yet."

The Dream of the Dancer.

I.—AN INTERLUDE.

"FAUSTINE! La Faustine!"

From stalls and balcony, Faustine! Faustine! from gallery and pit.

The orchestra struck up a quick, lively tune, now thumped and drummed, and whistled London over; and suddenly, in answer to these vociferous howls and cat-calls, there burst upon the stage a slender figure, lightly and even fantastically attired, leading up a whirling, aerial measure, a frenzied, barbaric morrice of flying lingerie—diaphanous, nebulous mazes, out of which gleamed the supple bending shape of the dancer, a vague nucleus.

The quickening of the music to a wild, delirious close was a fresh whetting to the enthusiasm. The coil of soaring gossamer drapery floated away through the wings to a renewal of shouts and clapping and howlings of delight. Gradually it died down to a mere faint murmur, finally subsiding into a muffled hubbub of tongues, out of which occasionally rose the late plaudits of a benighted or drunken enthusiast; and at length, amid a hush of new expectation, fresh numbers went up.

The dancer continued to float till she reached the door of her dressing-room. There she abandoned celestial navigation, and, having entered, slammed the door sharply behind her.

An incorrigible loiterer outside, a youth of immaculate shirt-front, heard with despair the turning of the key in the lock. He lingered on a minute or two longer, once venturing a mild tap upon the door; and at length turned away with disconsolate looks, and departed slowly along the passage. That was not all her dream.

She emerged later, closely veiled, and, summoning a boy, despatched him to hail her carriage; and then turned petulantly with a host of instructions to a bewildered maid. The boy returned after a minute, and led the way, with confederate glances at the maid, down to the pavement, where the sight of an officious jehu, erect and with hand upon the door, sent him scowling back along the passage "quite chapfallen." He caught the name of a particular palatial hotel given to the jehu, with an added word: "Quickly!"

London was bellowing like Theseus' minotaur in a labyrinth of smart yellow fog. Along Piccadilly the lights danced like spirits of evil. A few passers-by and one or two policemen halted to peer through the glass, startled into vague interest in the occupant by the unwarranted haste and temerity of the driver.

They continued to hold their way through the maze of cabs and buses, and at length drew up before the portly doors of one of the largest hotels in town.

She alighted quickly and entered the building, exciting no kind of curiosity, and exhibiting a familiarity with the place which made her passport and gave her swift passage up the private corridor to a certain door, before which she paused.

The jehu, with Rosicrucian understanding, turned in his own length and swept importantly towards Charing Cross.

After a minute's hesitation the woman touched the electric button on the wall, which was instantly replied to by a tall manservant in evening dress, who passed a scarcely-discernible nod of recognition; and by no other sign than that, desired her to enter.

He then retired, and returning after a short absence, begged her with a somewhat exaggerated gravity to follow him. The valet conducted into a lavishly-appointed apartment, densely draped and carpeted, where a man reclined in a richly-fitted bed, whose silky coverlet drooped and trailed along the floor, with a half-smoked cigar between his thin lips. He greeted her with an interrogative glance, ran his fingers through his partial grey hair, and then gave a prolonged whistle.

"Kate Harcourt!" He bowed. "La Faustine!"

The dancer dropped into a chair beside the bed. She fetched a long sigh and then laughed.

"Well?"

"Well, Kate," said the invalid, raising himself on his elbow and taking long pulls at his cigar, but without effect. "It's gone out again, confound it! Can't smoke, can't eat, can't even drink! There, I suppose it was because you came in. Most things went out—usually—when you came in, eh, Kate?"

"Usually!" she repeated, in a tone defying any ulterior insinuation.

"Good things—usually," he pursued.

"Usually!" rejoined the woman, echoing the bare word. She removed her heavy veil, disclosing the face of a remarkably handsome woman, remarkable for a singular morbidezza relieved by a splash of boldness, which came out in the voice, a type, perhaps, of the vulgarly handsome, even of the odalisques.

She caught the gleam of a mirror beside her, and could not resist the temptation of a glance and an affectionate pat to her mass of fine hair. Then she turned sidewise on the chair and began picking with her gloved fingers at the silken coverlet of the bed.

"Well, I'm here, Kate!" said the moribund profligate; "though I shan't be able to say that long, so whatever it is, say it at once."

"Yes, Lord Mivers," the woman said quietly.

"Light this thing for me, please," he asked. She rose as he indicated, brought the matches, struck one and held it while he puffed feebly; then with all gravity depositing the burnt end carefully in the ash-tray.

"Well!" he said again, contentedly watching the slow dissipation of his smoke cloud. For some time silence ensued between them.

"You're companionable!" he said at last. "Now, Kate, what's up to bring you back to me?"

"My daughter—I came on business, Lord Mivers."

The simple seriousness of her manner promised amusement.

"Is that possible? You on business?"

She made a move, encircling the back of the chair with her arm.

"On business for once, Jack—yes. But my daughter, as I was saying. You don't know her, of course, never heard of her?"

"This isn't compromising, is it?" he asked smiling. "There, the beastly thing has gone out again!" he cried with childish petulance, flinging the cigar across the room.

"Of course you knew nothing of that," she continued. "Well, let that go. I want to find—to make fitting provision for her future, make her a lady."

"A French lady, a *demoiselle—artiste?*" he interrupted.

She went on, "I want her to be a lady, you understand the meaning of that better than I."

"And so I'm to make one of her?"

"I've thought of this for two years now—I mean to make her one. It shall be quite regular. I'll have legal guardians and trustees."

"Of what?"

"Oh! everything that is to be hers."

"And what's to be hers? Who's her father?"

She turned on him a pensive face, seeming intended to flout all irrelevancy, and went on:

"I shall efface—disappear, bury my name with myself, and make the road clear for her. I've thought of all this for two years now," she said again with that curious earnestness of voice which caused the dying man to observe her keenly.

"What have you got to give her?" he asked.

"Nothing yet but a few trinkets and things."

"Where is she at present?"

"At present? I know—at school," she admitted after a pause.

"Do you think, then, you have been such to her that she will forget you conveniently?"

"She does not know me, except as a visitor, a friend, and not that too well. I have been so careful to avoid all risk of spoiling her future. If it were known for a moment—"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted. "But who's she—the guardian you spoke of?"

"Not you, that's plain!"

"Then why did you come to me?"

He was perfectly sincere this time, somehow touched by her gravity and the late blossoming in her of maternal instincts. She appeared to be pondering something in her mind which she still found difficult of expression. With a gravity equal to her own, he said:

"You may count on a square five hundred then—a token of love and esteem," he added, waiting for her to smile. But she did not. "Come to me in the morning," he proceeded; "it may have grown, mushroom growth, to a full. Well, we'll say no more about that just now. It depends on the sort of night I get. But the girl?"

"Leave her alone!" she cried angrily.

"Oh, well!" he said, "I certainly shall in a day or so. Can't die out of doctor's orders, you know. Three months, he said—can't be more than a few days now. All the same, what's her name to be—her 'rapturous new name'—you understand; the one I'm to give her?"

"You?"

"As her—not—no, not her godfather; let's say pecuniary saint, vague ancestor, planter of the lineal tree of respectability."

The woman sat sullenly picking at the coverlet—then she laughed.

"Well," she cried, "what will you call her, since you endow her?"

"Pearl," he said after a moment's reflection, "Pearl of Great Price. Good!—estimating a possible forty years of existence as not altogether priceless, with a round thousand or so thrown in; not to speak of other thousands which we before observed went out—Pearl? No! That was the name of that insufferable brat in old Hawthorne's book. How does it suit, Kate?" He stopped her speaking with a wave of his hand. "No; that won't do. It's an odd fancy; call her Mysie."

"Mysie it is," she said suddenly. Oh, but, Jack, that was somebody's name once! Tell me, Jack."

"No, Kate," he said; "dead men tell no tales. Come to me in the morning, and we'll see it all straight. Now, good-bye!—there!"

He took her kiss as aforetime, and then turned over with his face to the wall.

Without a word she touched the bell, and the man in evening dress re-appeared. She motioned to him, and quietly withdrawing herself and the man, closed the door behind them.

That was her dream.

II.—IN THE MORNING.

The manager sat at his table thoughtfully perusing the morning's correspondence. From time to time he would lift his head wondering at some extra flourish of the secretary's scrawly pen as it went crawling along over the paper, till, his attention slowly returning, he came back with a start to the letter in his hand.

"Ah, yes!" and he went on reading. Thus it ran:

"I beg to inform you that, unless I receive the £2 salary due to me for one week in lieu of the regular notice within three days—"

"Have you got the basket your side, Croker?" he said, taking up the next.

"I write to know if you have come across the ring. It had two stones—emeralds—which were lost coming out, near the door, last Thursday. I have not seen it since. I was in the gallery. I would be glad if you would have a look round and see if it fell into any corners. If it is not found, a ticket for stalls any night next week would be taken as compensation, Tuesday or Thursday preferred. The stones cost over two pounds. I send you a stamped envelope, and await your reply."

"Pass the scissors!" said the manager wearily; and he cut off the stamp neatly, and reached again for the basket.

Mr. Richard Aublet (Dicky Aublet) began to perspire, even despite the cold, spongy fog that hung in clayey masses about the windows. He seized another envelope, looked at it, laid it by, and took up the next. The slowly-diminishing pile began to alarm him; and at that the twelve o'clock post came in.

"Three? Oh, thanks!—thought you said thirty for the minute."

He went on recklessly ripping up the envelopes. All at once he stopped. Then, for a minute, he let his eye wander slowly across the room, above the bent shoulders of the secretary, in silent contemplation of a particular portrait on the wall, and thence slowly back to the secretary's bald head.

"A minute, Mr. Croker!" he said. "Just take down a letter, if you will." The secretary's long fingers wandered in search of his notebook, and immediately he dropped into an attitude of attention.

"Um! better say, mad'moiselle, dear mad'moiselle," began the manager between the puffs of his cigarette. "The management exceedingly regret to learn that the slight intimation—cross out slight, Croker; she was about boxing my ears over it—now; intimation received by them some time since of the intended conclusion of the highly satisfactory engagement between themselves and La Faustine, as well as of her ultimate retirement from the stage, must now be considered by them as final. While regretfully acknowledging this notification, however, the management beg to state their willingness to consider any offer of terms which Mad'moiselle Faustine or her agents may be pleased to submit for a renewal of the engagement nominally terminating on the twenty-first. The unparalleled and phenomenal success attending Mad'moiselle Faustine's performances, may be considered a sufficient inducement on their part to accord a large consideration to any such offers which they cordially solicit, and—"

There he came to a pause, blown and spent.

"Finish it, Croker," he gasped, and the secretary's pen flew on to the conclusion in words fit and few. He ran his eye over the copy. A little twinge disturbed his face, like an expression of pain borne silently, and he read again down to a line.

"Anything wrong?" asked the manager. "Word?"

"It—" squeaked the secretary.

"Which?"

"It's—not quite—altogether correct," jerked forth the secretary.

"Well, which part of it? Sounds right enough."

"The management: on their part—should be it's," he explained mildly.

"Thought you said it was wrong. See, I'm right after all, generally am."

"Yes," said the secretary, drawing his pencil through the word. "It was easier than explaining, for the manager was sure to be right."

Then he began in his hesitating voice to read the letter aloud.

"Croker's yer name, and a good name too," said the manager.

"Will you sign this?" asked the secretary, after tragic efforts to laugh.

The manager nodded; then he struck out his correction, put back the manager's word, and went on with his letter.

The telephone bell began to ring spasmodically, and the manager went to answer it. After a minute's silence he dropped the thing in disgust.

"See if you can hear what he says, Croker!" he called, flinging out of the room.

The secretary coughed, seized the dangling receiver, and began to yell frantically:

"Hulloa! hullo there! Hullo!"

"Don't!" shouted the manager from the next room. "Don't Mr. Croker; you'll frighten him!"

"What?" roared Croker.

"You'll frighten him away!"

"Yes!" said Croker, subduing his voice.

"Who are you?"

"Don't do it!" thundered the manager.

"I will!" answered the secretary, putting up the receiver and catching at the handle.

Before he could make a single turn the bell commenced to ring again violently; so he took down the receiver from the hook, and once more began to speak:

"Are you there?" came the phantom voice at the other end.

"Yes!"

"Hotel Palatine!" said the voice, becoming loud and official.

"Yes," croaked the secretary. "What d'ye want?"

"Regret—"

"Who?" yelled Croker.

"Regret to inform you, sir"—the voice grew confused—"lord-

ship—Lord Mivers, sir, died here early this morning."

"Where?" cried the secretary.

"In his rooms!" replied the voice at a pitch of desperation.

"Who are—"

"Lord Mivers," repeated the unseen hotel clerk.

"What number?" screamed the secretary.

"Room number twenty-nine; second-floor!"

"Who d'you want?"

"Sir George Croyle. His lordship's valet told us to ring you up, sir."

"Any instructions?"

"Yes; you're on the wrong number—ring off!"

"Have you finished—finished?"

"Between five and—"

"Ring off!"

"Five and six this morning."

"Finished?"

"You the Ringold Club, Piccadilly?"

"No. Folly Theatre, Limited!" bellowed the secretary.

"Yes—yes. Smith and Archer!" came a cry out of the infinite.

"Sending on this morning to fix chandelier."

"Chandelier!" gasped Croker, with a foot at last on terra firma.

"Chandelier—yes! Been long enough about it! Good-bye! What?"

(Concluded on page 26).



Mistress (finding visitor in the kitchen): "Who is this, Mary?"
Mary: "Please 'm, my brother."
Mistress (suspiciously): "You are certainly not very much alike."
Mary: "Please 'm, we were, mum; but he's just had his beard shaved off, and that makes him look so different."



"Do you get on better with your wife?"

"Oh, yes; we have arranged that one of us shall always be out when the other is at home."



"What makes you carry that purse in your hand; aren't you afraid of losing it?"
"No, dear; but I might be if you increased my allowance a bit."

(He decided not to refer to that subject again.)

"Lord Mivers—" pursued the hotel clerk hotly.

"Who is it, Croker?" inquired the manager.

"Smith and Archer coming about the chandelier."

The door was pushed suddenly open, and Dabbs came in with a card between his fingers.

"Lady, sir!" announced Dabbs.

"La Faustine, by gosh!" exclaimed the manager, reading aloud: "Oh, yes," he nodded. "Show her up—sharp!" and Dabbs departed.

In another minute there was a rustle of skirts, and Faustine was in the room.

"Well, Dick?"

"This way," urged the manager, with a grandiose sweep of his arm.

"Moruin" blurted the secretary from his table.

The manager closed the inner door upon them, and Croker began a hunt for his pen.

The telephone started again.

"That wretched man again!" groaned the secretary on his knees.

He went back to the telephone and shouted into the transmitter: "Bury him—bury him!"

"Who?" asked the manager, suddenly emerging from the sanctum.

"Man dead at the Palatine, and they don't know what to do with him. Bury him!" he shouted back at the telephone.

The head of the dancer appeared in the doorway. Poor fellow!

Croker was suffering from one of his bad fits this morning.

Poor Croker!

"Lord Mivers!" ejaculated Croker.

"Don't know him," said the manager. "Shareholder?"

She shrank back with her teeth pinched hard into her nether lip.

"Died at the hotel," jerked forth the secretary.

"No loss," said the manager; "nobody'll cry— By gosh!" he added.

In the mirror over the mantel he caught the dancer's reflection. Her veil was lifted, and a little lace handkerchief went up to her eyes.

"Oh!" he said in a minute; "that letter you took down, Mr. Croker. Oh, very well; just rip it up when you come to it. La Faustine will not retire after all. Best stroke of business the Folly's done this year!"

And this is the dream of the dancer, which she dreamed three years and afterwards forgot. J. H. D.

A Midnight Explosion.

SHE: "My face is my fortune."

He: "So is mine."

"Let's join fortunes."

They did, and the concussion woke up the whole family.

* * *

Another Newspaper Horror.

MRS. JONES (indignantly): "These newspapers are just simply not fit to read."

Mr. Jones: "Another crime, I suppose?"

Mrs. Jones: "Yes; here is a description of the gown I wore at the ball last night, that must have been written by some ignorant, amateur male reporter that didn't know a dress from a dromedary!"

Our Splendid Journal for Boys.

EDITED BY CHARLES SHUREY.

THE FIRST MONTHLY PART OF

COMRADES.

With a **Magnificent Coloured Plate**, was published Monday, February 21st. It consists of Four Double Numbers (128 pp., price 3d.), bound in a Handsome Coloured Wrapper, and beautifully illustrated by FRISTON & PROUSE. Part I. contains the opening chapters of

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Our Grand New Journal, "THE MONSTER COMIC," with Plate 1d. See page 29.

Our Original Prize Jokes.

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No Jokes will be considered which are not addressed to "Joke Editor," SKETCHY BITS, Caxton House, Gough Square, London, E.C.

Our Prize Jokes.

THE following jokes, "Proper Place to Wear 'Em," "Chief Justice had no Authority," and "Rat Catching," have been adjudged the best sent in this week, and Postal Orders for 10s., 7s. 6d., and 2s. 6d. will be forwarded to the authors if within a week they are found to be original.

Proper Place to Wear 'Em.

STREET URCHIN (admiring lady cyclist in bloomers): "Say, Sally, ain't they all right, eh?"

Sally: "Yus, Dick; I got a pair on, yer know, only I wears 'em underneath."—(Sent by A. W. McLaren, 8, Drapers Gardens, Throgmorton Avenue, London.) (10s.)

* * *

Chief Justice had no Authority.

ON one of the many excursions to the Isle of Man last season, Chief Justice O'B—, Judge W—, and many other dignitaries of the Irish Bench were participants.

When the boat had got fairly out to sea, the waters became very rough, and Judge W— was taken violently with sea sickness. As he was moaning aloud in his agony, the Chief Justice, laying a soothing hand on his shoulder, said:

"My dear W—, can I do anything for you? Just suggest what you wish?"

"I wish," said the sea-sick judge, "your honour would overrule this motion."—(Sent by George Henry Lee, Bagnalstown, Co. Carlow.) (7s. 6d.)

* * *

Rat Catching.

THE Orderly Room Clerk filling in recruit's attestation paper asks the following:

Clerk: "What persuasion are you, my man?"

Recruit: "A farrier."

Clerk: "No, no! What religion are you?"

Receiving no answer asks:

"What do you do on Sunday mornings, my man?"

Recruit: "Go rat catching with father."

Clerk puts R.C. (Roman Catholic—Rat Catching).—(Sent by Corporal W. Corling, Royal Engineers, Shorncliffe Camp, Kent.) (2s. 6d.)

The following are commended:

Wondered Why.

SOME time ago a man entered a public-house rather hurriedly, and, after looking through all the bars, turned with an anxious face to the barman, and asked:

"Has a blind man just looked in here?"

Then he wondered why the barman laughed.—(Sent by W. J. Arlow, 1, Warwick Street, Charing Cross.)

* * *

The Echo.

JONES: "Why is London the most mysterious city in the world?"

Brown: "I'll give it up, old chap."

Jones: "Why you can stand on the Tower Bridge and shout, and then go to Fleet Street and buy *The Echo*."—(Sent by A. Jarvis, 27, Church Road, Battersea.)

* * *

Army Etiquette.

DURING the recent Indian frontier war a skirmishing party were endeavouring to rush a fortified position, when the commanding officer recalled an over-enthusiastic private with the words:

"I'm first, for honour's sake!"

The officer's fate was soon settled by a shot from the fort, when the soldier, seeming now to be in no great hurry to ascend, stood aside, and shouted, to the delight of his comrades:

"Are there any more gentlemen for honour's sake?"—(Sent by H. J. Hodge, 38, Goulston Street, Battersea.)

* * *

OFFICER (inspecting soldier's account-book): "Is there any alterations in your next-of-kin, my man?"

Private Jones: "Yes, sir; I've a pair of trousers to go down yet."—(Sent by Bombardier J. Dunk, R.A., The Barracks, Christchurch, Hants.)

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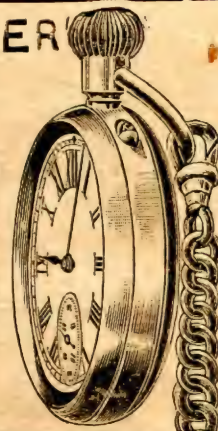
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TOM HOOD.

A more pathetic theme, surely, poet rarely found than that which gave rise to Tom Hood's beautiful poem—the "Song of the Shirt." If you have never read it, do so; it will give you some idea, even in these enlightened times, of how the poor live. Poverty, Hunger, and Dirt must, we suppose, always be, to a certain extent, in our midst. Still, you can do something to lighten the burdens of the dressmaker by letting her know that for **£4 4s.** (less a liberal discount for cash) she can have one of the finest sewing machines to be bought. Every part is thoroughly well-finished and guaranteed to work as well in every respect as machines costing double the price. If you are thinking of buying a machine, kindly write us for particulars. You need not purchase unless satisfied. *Mention this paper.*

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WINNERS OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.—No. XVIII.

(For description see page 10.)

SPECIAL NOTICE.

GRAND NEW COMIC JOURNAL.

On WEDNESDAY LAST, MARCH 9th, was published No. 1 of the

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Fashions of the Day.

BY A FRENCH MODISTE.

I QUITE forgot, when writing my article last week, that I had promised to describe the illustrations of the week before. This omission, judging by the many inquiries I



No. 70.

have received, has caused many of my readers trouble and disappointment. In No. 146, Fig. 64 represents a smart bodice in fine cloth, in a rather bright shade of green, with a yoke of cloth the colour of chamois leather, handsomely braided with black; seven fine tucks down each side of the front are narrower at the waist, widening again on the basque. All the edges are finished with flat silk braid and twisted Russia; the cuffs and collar are turned out with black velvet to match the waistband.

Fig. 65 illustrates a charming bodice, between an Eton and zouave, ornamented with a bold pattern in velvet, outlined with fine tinsel cord, and edged with narrow fur. The bodice and skirt are made in dark cigar-brown face cloth, and the under-bodice in velvet to match. The sash is green ribbon, twisted twice round the waist, and tied with short bows and long ends at the side, as I explained to you lately.

The third sketch is a little coat bodice in purple zibeline cloth; the revers and cuffs are in pale blue, braided in purple braid, opening over a full vest of soft blue silk; and a knot of lace on either side softens the plain collar-band.

Now I must refer you to this week's designs—Figs. 70, 71, and 72. In the first you have the very latest idea for a smart spring wrap, combining jacket and cape. The bodice part is pouched into a velvet waistband showing the front, which is filled into the wide yoke. The cape forms a wateau pleat at the back, and the yoke forms epaulettes over the shoulders. This should be in a lighter shade of cloth than the garment itself, and covered with black guipure.

Then you have the latest "resurrection" in the shape of a directoire. When the

princess style became so popular the former was inevitable; the lines are equally graceful, and there is far greater scope for variation. This one was made in fine blue serge, handsomely trimmed with black velvet and braid in two different widths. The fulness at the back falls in large flutes from a few inches below the waist, or some prefer it in two large box-pleats, but this makes it resemble a long coat. The pretty hat is in black velvet, the crown draped with pale blue silk, and a black osprey and bird.

Speaking of hats, I feel sure my readers will appreciate Fig. 72. A toque of black satin straw, with a fluted brim, has pale pink roses in between. At the left side a large bow of pale green ribbon and two wings of cream lace. Any young lady with a taste for millinery could easily copy this charming model at a small cost.

Another hat, to be worn well tilted over the eyes, was in coarse brown straw, with a wide brim and rather low crown; a very wide bow of pale green ribbon, with a shot effect, was fastened in front with a paste ornament; the top of the crown was covered with leaves of the violet, and sprays of these blossoms and foliage stood high at the back, where the brim was turned up with a cache-peigne of pale pink roses. This combination sounds very startling,

but I can assure you the effect was lovely.

Ostrich feathers remain much in evidence on the latest millinery, especially on toques



No. 72.

or round the brims of large hats; but flowers of every description will be worn, and will often form the only trimming.

Bright red hats are still fashionable, and frequently enliven a sombre costume. One in bright poppy-red satin straw had a very full ruche of crêpe-de-chine, in the same tint, round the crown, and three large black tips fastened on the left side with a large jet ornament. This was to be worn well tilted over the face by a high jet comb serving as cache-peigne.

Evening dresses, particularly those for young ladies, have skirts formed of several layers of gauzy material placed one over the other, beginning with a petticoat of thin silk, and having the outside one jewelled or spangled. Tulle is much worn by debutantes this season, and is always made in this way, sometimes with the outer skirt looped up on one side with a bunch of flowers.



No. 71.

WE have had so many inquiries for the patterns of the garments illustrated in this paper that we have made arrangements to supply flat paper patterns of any of our designs at the following reasonable rates, upon receipt of P.O.: Bodice, blouse, or jacket, 6d.; skirt or petticoat, 6d.; sleeve, 4d.; skirt and bodice, dressing or tea gown, or ulster, 1s. 0d.

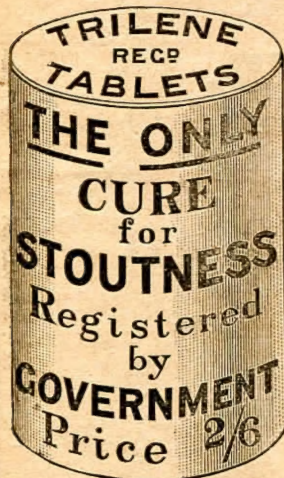
These patterns are cut for a 25-inch waist and 38 bust. We also undertake to cut patterns to measure from 2s. 6d., or entire costume, 3s. 6d. Measurement forms can be had on application to the office.

All applications for paper patterns, enclosing P.O.'s or stamps, should be addressed to "SKETCHY BITS," Caxton House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, and the envelope marked "Pattern Department" in the left hand corner.

** ALL the Photo blocks appearing in SKETCHY BITS are produced by the Press Etching Co., 8 and 9, Plough Court, Fetter Lane, E.C.

Our Grand New Journal, "THE MONSTER COMIC," with Plate ½d. See page 29.

ALL FAT PEOPLE



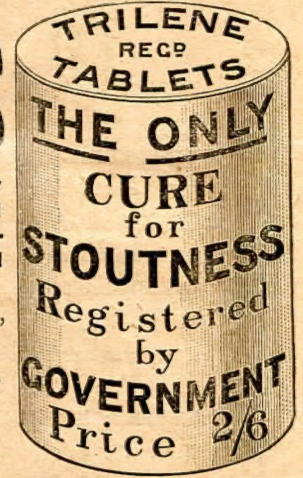
Can be CURED by taking TRILENE TABLETS (REGD.).

For a few weeks. They are sent privately, will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY (Abdominal or General) PERMANENTLY. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes:—"Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2/6 to N. WELLS, Manager, THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London.

An interesting Book on Obesity is sent with every Box.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67, Alexandra Road, Norwich, 19th October, 1896.
"Gentlemen—In reference to Trilene Tablets I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; the action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but, although the disease was, I consider, chronic, the tablets soon reduced the same completely.
"You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.
"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.
"Mrs. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."
Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.
Miss S. J. PRITCHARD says:—"They have done me good, I am 21 lbs. lighter already."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes:—"Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.
Miss M. FLAVELL says:—"I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894:—"Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One party acquaintance of my own, by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

M. GILLESPIE, 50, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says:—"I have lost just 5 stone."

Mrs. F. HARPER, 61, Portland Crescent, Leeds, writes:—"My doctor persuaded me to try a box, and I find they have done my breathing a lot of good and I can get about much better. My doctor did not wish his name mentioned, but they have done him good personally."

Mrs. FLETCHER, 7, Elm Grove, Higher Trannere, Cheshire, says:—"I am quite satisfactorily reduced. Please send my friend a box to enclosed address."

The Lady's Pictorial, 27th March, 1897, says:—"Perhaps no one suffers more in a mild way than does a stout person. Difficulty of moving about, difficulty of breathing, and also a general want of tone in the system, is what these sufferers have almost always to endure. In endeavouring to reduce weight by unavailing means such as rigorous dietary and taking harmful medicines, they suffer untold agonies, more often than not quite ineffectual. A great deal of worry and mental anxiety may be saved by sending direct to the Trilene Company for a 2s. 6d. box of their Tablets. Three of these taken three times a day shortly before meals will gradually and effectually reduce the weight without any harm to the general health. The Tablets are small and pleasant to the taste."

A. BROWN, of 25, Edwin Street, High Pallion, Sunderland, says:—"You have no idea what a most wonderful effect the Tablets had. I am a great deal thinner, and better in health."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14, Buckleigh Road Streatham, says:—"I lost 9 lbs. from the box I took."

E. GILLESPIE, of Crossfield House, Stainland, Halifax, writes:—"The Tablets are lessening my size very much, and my two sisters who are also going in for your treatment are equally satisfied."

M. A. THOROLD, of Toft Lodge, Bourne, Lincolnshire, says:—"I find myself 11 lbs. less in weight, and I can face my own boots now, which I could not do before."

The Woman at Home for July, 1896, says:—"It is noticeable how many ladies of the leisured class show a tendency to put on flesh. A slim girlish figure is an ornament to even a plain face, and is carefully cultivated by anyone so fortunate as to possess it. A tendency to

corpulency is nothing more or less than a death-blow to elegance. A most successful remedy has been introduced however by the Trilene Company, of 66, Finsbury Pavement. Their Trilene Tablets form a safe and efficient cure, as is clearly shown by the number of testimonials received by the inventor, and will be a boon indeed to full-blown loveliness, when the possibility of graceful outlines thickening and waist measurements having to be increased first bursts upon the owner's horrified mind."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.
Mr. J. THOMAS writes:—"When I started the Tablets I weighed 17 stone, and have got down to 14 stone 9 lbs."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.
Mr. Wm. USHER says:—"A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.
Miss S. WOODHOUSE writes:—"I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

Mrs. GIBSON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says:—"I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896:—"Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets, which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity. The Tablets are sold in boxes at 2/6, and are obtainable from the Trilene Company, 66, Finsbury Pavement, E.C."

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes:—"When I began your Tablets I was 12 stone 5 lbs.; I now scale at 10 stone 11 lbs.—my case too is hereditary."

L. LUDINGTON, "Sunnyside," Station Road, Sidecup, says:—"I have benefited greatly, and have lost a stone."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Caliside, Paisley, writes:—"I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10 stone; reduced 1 stone 8 lbs., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says:—"My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12 stone 6 lbs. to 10 stone 4 lbs."

The Englishwoman of Xmas, 1896, says:—"There is no longer any need for ladies to suffer the many admitted evils of stoutness, for the Trilene Tablets are now well known to be an effectual cure. The Trilene Company, of Finsbury Pavement, seem to be doing a good work, and they are glad to furnish all needful particulars. While a good many have hitherto needlessly despaired of ever regaining an elegant figure, they could with the aid of Trilene have certainly accomplished this."

Miss A. ATKINS, 329, Southdown Road, Liverpool, writes:—"I lost nearly a stone from taking one box."

Miss E. ARNOLD, of Collingwood House, Camberley, Surrey, says:—"Having weighed 14 stone, your Tablets have reduced me to 12 stone."

Mrs. FRANKLIN, 47, Byne Road, Sydenham, says:—"So far I am delighted with them."

Mrs. HALL, 6, Gregory's Row, Low Gates, Slaty, says:—"I found great benefit from your Tablets."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes:—"My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15 lbs. in weight since taking the Tablets: I am sure I thank you on his account."

J. SMITH, 130, Edge Lane, Liverpool:—"I do not want any more Tablets, as they have greatly reduced my weight."

"Miss J. GUISE, 5, North End, Croydon, says:—"I cannot speak too highly of the Tablets—I was stout all my life until a few weeks ago, when I first began your treatment. I was surprised to find they acted so admirably. I am now getting quite a slender figure, besides being better in health."

Mrs. HOOK, of Blanford Road, Wemley, Middlesex, writes:—"I do not see any reason why I should not give these Tablets their due. I not only found them to much reduce the flesh, but my rheumatic pains were greatly diminished after taking them one week."

The Happy Home, September 19th, 1896, says:—"Few people suffer more acutely than those afflicted with obesity, and few receive less sympathy. With many such people, change of diet, of climate, or indeed anything they can do, makes not the slightest difference; they still continue to put on flesh. But their case is not hopeless, as they will realise with joy if they try the Trilene Tablets. They can be obtained from The Trilene Company, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London. While not in any way affecting the general health, these Tablets have a most marked effect in reducing the figure to healthy and comfortable proportions."

Balgowan Lodge, Methven, N.B.
Miss MCPHERSON writes:—"I have taken a box, and am reduced 1 stone in weight."

Miss M. HAWKES, of "Stoneleigh," Abermarle Road, Beckenham, considers herself quite cured after having taken the Tablets for five weeks—she has lost 1 stone 4 lbs. in weight.

Col. SERGT. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says:—"A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says:—"My patient has lost 1 stone in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

The Family Novelist, March 30th, 1895, says:—"A great many women who are plump by nature worry about the excess of adipose tissue, which indeed is often a great drawback to personal beauty. However, there is a perfectly safe and simple remedy in the Trilene Tablets, which are not only innocuous, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

Miss HUMPHREYS, of Claremont Buildings, Shrewsbury, has lost 1 stone in weight already, and thinks the Tablets deserve every success.

Mrs. O'CONNOR, 2, Kensington Square Mansions, London, writes:—"I am much less stout for taking them."

E. WEST, 19, Eastbourne Road, South Tottenham, London, says:—"I am quite satisfied, and am much thinner."

Miss M. GRIEVE, De Quincey Cottage, Polton, Scotland, says:—"I have found great benefit from your Tablets, and can now get a-out with ease. My friend said I would soon not be able to see for my stoutness."

E. HAYES, of Elm Grove, Walton-on-Thames, says:—"I have lost 13 lbs. since taking the tablets, and I can walk easily, which I could not do before. I wish I had them before instead of paying my doctor for which he did me no good."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Station Road, Ross, Hereford, says:—"Have been reduced from 13st. to 11st., and you may use this statement. I can recommend them."

PRINCESS LIECHTENSTEIN OF LANDSBERG, Austria, writes:—"Pray send me your Tablets directly."

LADY CONSTANCE CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden:—"I am highly pleased with your Tablets."

COUNTESS FURSTENBERG writes:—"The Tablets act speedily and well."

Thansi, India, September 14th, 1897.
Surgeon-General R. S. BRANDER, M.D., writes:—"As far as my experience goes, your Tablets form an excellent preparation for reducing weight."

77, Hindhill Street, Heywood, Lancs, Feb. 5th, 1898.
"Gentlemen—Your Tablets are wonderful. I have nearly finished the box and am 21 lbs. lighter. The change is so great that several friends have begun the treatment, which not only lessens weight but strengthens weak rheumatic joints—such has been my case."

(Miss) M. A. HEYWOOD.

The Trilene Association, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.

Advertising Managers, GORDON & GOTCH, 15, ST. BRIDE STREET, LONDON, to whom all applications should be addressed.

TO LADIES.

ESPECIALLY to those who require an absolutely certain and speedy remedy for all Female Complaints, from whatever cause arising—a remedy which in thousands of cases has afforded complete relief, generally in a few hours. No case is hopeless. Mrs. W. writes:—"By adopting your treatment my anxiety and misery was over within twenty-four hours, although for three months I had been daily taking pills and other things in vain. Half the quantity you sent me proved effective." Full particulars will be forwarded to any lady on receipt of addressed envelope. The medicine is not expensive, as one bottle at 4s. 6d. is generally sufficient for any case. (By Post, 4s. 9d.)

A sworn guarantee accompanies all medicine and testimonials. Write at once to

MRS. B. S. ALLEN,

145, Stockwell Road, London, S.W.

THE John Noble HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES.

10/6

Highest Known Value for Money

These Costumes are all supplied in two good durable cloths—(1) JOHN NOBLE CHEVIOT SERGE and (2) JOHN NOBLE COSTUME COATING—the first a weighty, weather-resisting fabric, the latter smooth surfaced and medium weight.

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COLOURS of all Costumes—Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, Ruby, Sage, Green, Electric, Fawn, Purple and Grey. THE THREE SIZES IN STOCK are 34, 36, 38 ins. round bust (under arms). Skirts being 38, 40, 42 ins. long in front. Any other size can be made to measure, 1/8 extra. **MODELS:** ORDERS executed in 12 hours.

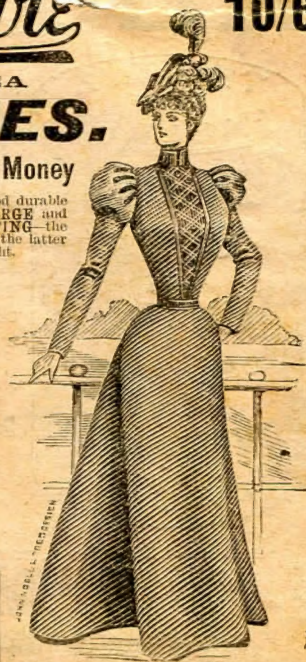
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Made in strong serge with saddle top, full sleeves and pockets.
SIZES and PRICES:
21 24 27 30 ins.
1/6 2/ 2/6 3/ ea.
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MODEL 894.

THE NEW "GORDON" COSTUME. With well cut and finished bodice, trimmed fancy stitching a l'Ecosse. Full wide tailorskirt. Price complete, 10/6. 6d. extra. Skirt alone 5/6. Carriage 5d.

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Please Mention "SKETCHY BITS" when Ordering.

JOHN NOBLE, Ltd., BROOK ST. MANCHESTER.
MILLS,

MATRIMONIAL BALDNESS.

"Mr. H. Thurber Richardson is a free American citizen who has little or no hair on his head. He is involved, the New York papers tell us, in a divorce suit, a side issue of which is whether his baldness is the outcome of matrimony. He is the respondent in the case, and part of his defence consists in the production of two photographs, one before matrimony with long flowing hair, the other after some years of married life, without any hair whatever. He says his wife pulled his hair all out. She replies that it fell out, and that she wasn't even there when the baldness occurred. The case will come up for trial.

An interesting feature of the matter is that since Mr. Richardson's claim was filed he has been much annoyed by representatives of baldness cures, who offer to make a contract with him to restore his hair to the condition it was in before his marriage.

'We make a speciality of married men,' said one agent who called at his office. 'Our lotion will produce hair upon the summit of the most confirmed married man in New York. When a man moults his hair on a count of matrimony it is much easier to cure him than if the baldness is due to disease, because even the most grasping wife usually leaves some of the hair roots, and with proper cultivation they may be made to sprout again.'—Daily Telegraph, Feb. 2, 1898.

It is not our business to endeavour to peep behind the scenes and harrow the feelings of our readers with a description of this domestic quarrel. That the results were awful is clear, and we only hope that the unfortunate Plaintiff will succeed in obtaining a cure for his baldness. If he only knew of JUNIS, a splendid preparation for the hair which is sold by the BARCLAY CO., St. Bride Street, London, there would be an end to his sorrows. JUNIS is the finest thing in the world for this sort of thing, and its efficacy and cheapness are well known.

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